GTA SAN ANDREAS GO KILLING IN THE COUNTRY! FIRST OUT-OF-CITY PICS

BEST EVER MAG!

COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES

CVG

THE WORLD'S FIRST & BEST GAMES MAG

EXCLUSIVE! Street racing gets supercharged! Hot mods, phat rides and fit chicks rule the underground

NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2

PRINCE OF PERSIA 2

Goodbye poncey shoes, hello throat-slitting action!

WIN A PSP!

Your second chance to be the UK's first to own a PSP

NINTENDO'S DS GOES FINAL

New design plus 60 launch games revealed

SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY

EXCLUSIVE! CVG gets access-all-areas to Sam Fisher's dark new masterpiece

PRO EVO 4

Official teams, new tricks and world-class gameplay – is this the best footie game ever?

OVER 71 GAMES RATED

DOOM 3 ✷ SECOND SIGHT
MARIO VS DONKEY KONG
CONFLICT: VIETNAM
NBA BALLERS ✷ SUDEKI
JUICED ✷ GRADIUS V
MARIO GOLF ADVANCE
HEADHUNTER: REDEMPTION
RAINBOW SIX: BLACK ARROW
CRIMSON SEAS 2
DYNASTY WARRIORS 4: EMPIRES
WINGS OF WAR ✷ MEGA MAN
AND LOADS MORE

PLUS! THE BEST 50 GAMES FOR YOUR CONSOLE!

DOOM 3

SHOCKING FIRST REVIEW!

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Before playing
Wario Ware

By Scot Yule, Aged 19
After playing
Wario Ware

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OCTOBER 2004

THE MONTH THAT...

Finally, it's judgement day for one of the most anticipated shooters ever...

CVG GOLD AWARD

DOOM 3™

MEET THY DOOM! IS ID'S PSYCHO SHOOTER A CHIP OFF THE OLD BUTCHER'S BLOCK?

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CVG IN NUMBERS

NUMBER OF GAMES	SCREENSHOTS	GAMES RATED	FAT RIMS
349	793	71	86

NFS UNDERGROUND 2 & A FAT LOAD MORE INSIDE

COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES
CVG
OCT 2004 ISSUE

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Tony Hawk's back with more skateboard related insanity that boasts a return to the classic gameplay, alongside some sick new chellenges!

JUST CALL US THE SNEAKER PIMPS!

Okay, it was us. We were the ones that managed to sneak inside Ubisoft's high security Montreal Studio to take a peek at Splinter Cell Chaos Theory.

And yes, that was CVG's Mike climbing inside EA's head office in San Francisco, nicking all the latest screens and info on Need For Speed Underground 2. But when you've got a rep for consistently delivering the biggest exclusives in videogaming, sometimes you have to play dirty. And trust us, we're real dirty...

Alex Simmons

Alex Simmons *Editor*

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The quirky handheld gets an official name and we've got the latest on the games

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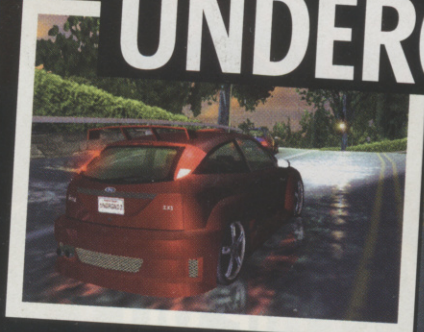

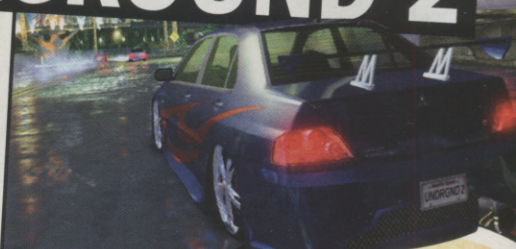

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the team

WHO MADE TEAM SELECTION FOR THIS MONTH'S GAME:

Alex Simmons **Editor**
CVG's diehard manager has been putting all the plays together this month to make this a winning issue.

Pete Walker **Managing Editor**
Sadly, Pete's being transferred. He's leaving Club CVG this month. He'll be missed by the entire squad.

Mike Cooper **Reviews Editor**
On the left wing is Brazilian ball wizard, Mike. After scoring an exclusive he sambas in his thong.

Graeme Boyd **News Editor**
On the right is Boydy – ALL Scot! He likes sniffing out hot news even more than deep-fried Mars bars.

Paul Davies **Contributing Ed**
CVG's secret weapon. We're not exactly sure what makes him so deadly, but he convinces us he is.

Jaime Smith **Art Editor**
He's up front, and if you think Roberto Carlos thumps it hard in Pro Evo, you should see J hit it.

Kris Barratt **Senior Designer**
Kris is the flair player in the team. Check out his fancy design skills on our Pro Evo 4 feature on page 106.

Mike Newson **Designer**
He's grumpy and his game ain't pretty, but he's solid, reliable and a team player... in one-a-side games.

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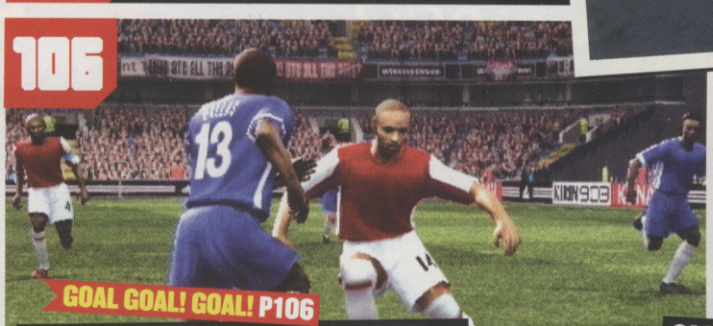

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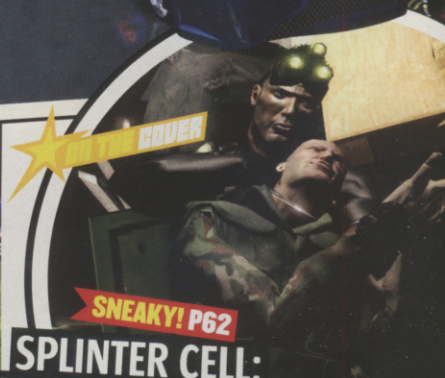
PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4

"EVERY YEAR WE PRAISE PES FOR ITS AMAZING BALL CONTROL, AND THIS TIME IT'S EVEN BETTER"



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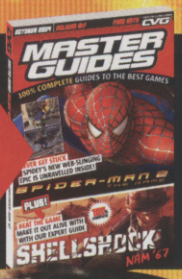

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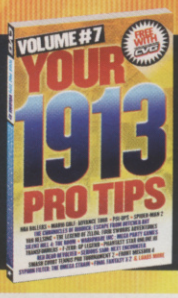
100% COMPLETE GUIDES TO THE BEST GAMES

SPIDER-MAN 2
- Never get stuck! Every inch of Spidey's adventure uncovered

SHELLSHOCK NAM '67
- Make it out of the jungle alive with the only guide you need



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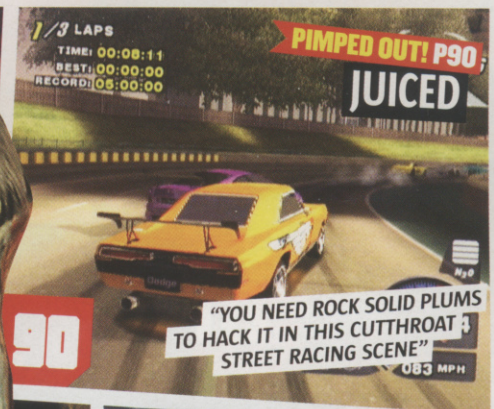
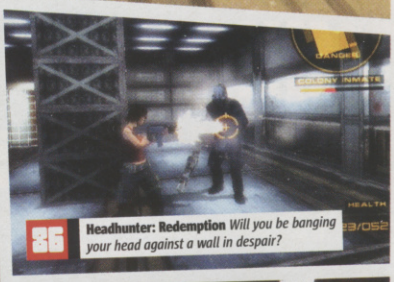
- Red Dead Revolver
- Silent Hill 4
- Front Mission 4
- Mario Golf: Advance Tour
- Kirby And The Amazing Mirror
- Megaman Anniversary Collection
- Spider-Man 2
- The Legend Of Zelda: Four Swords





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CHECK THE WORD ON THE GAMING STREET

Here at CVG we've got contacts all over the 'hood so we can hook you up with the hottest gaming news. Pop the page for the DL

planet CVG

HOT NEWS & GAMING GOSSIP FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

DON'T FORGET PSP!

Sony's little baby has been keeping quite a low profile lately, but that's all set to change at the Tokyo Game Show. The show runs from September 24-26, and the PSP is expected to make a huge appearance.

Three companies have already confirmed that they'll be showing PSP titles, including KOEI's Dynasty Warriors. CVG will be there bringing you the latest news – don't miss out!

DON'T BLAME THE GAMES

Have you had a debate about whether Manhunt caused the murder of a 14-year-old? Have you had to defend your love of games? Have you been made to feel like a weirdo?

Rockstar's brutal epic's had its innards splashed over the mainstream news, mostly by people who don't have a clue what they're on about. We were saddened to hear of Stefan Pakeerah's death, but it's a shame that the passion of millions of people gets dragged through the mud. Ask yourself this: does the backlash against Manhunt help anyone except the shops profiting from its notoriety? And anyway, there are so many great things happening in videogames. What about the final DS design? Or SmackDown! Vs RAW? Or Rockstar's other probable 18-certificate game, GTA: San Andreas? At least you know you'll see them in CVG!

Graeme Boyd

Graeme Boyd *News Editor*

this month...

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A whole gang of sweet shots show off SA's new features!

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EA's blazin' baller gets back on the blacktop. Cool feature info

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FF MMORPG gets UK PC release. You excited about that, then?

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Grease your arse up and grapple our hot news spesh!

LOOKING SMOOTH!

FRESH DS PICS AND INFO!

DS UNLEASHED!

NINTENDO CONFIRMS HOT HANDHELD'S NAME AND REVEALS FINAL DESIGN!

THE DS DIET

The chubby wee monkey shown off at E3's been on a crash diet, shedding the pounds to give it a slimmer, lighter and more muscular frame. Sexy!

NEWS NUGGETS

UNMISSABLE BITE-SIZED STORIES FROM ALL OVER THE PLANET

LIVE HITS THE MILL

If you play games on Xbox Live you're in good company – one million people around the world are now signed up to the awesome online gaming service. And with Xbox Live 3.0's expanded feature list and Halo 2 just around the corner, we doubt we'll ever have trouble finding someone to play against...

TOBY GARDS TOMB RAIDER'S FUTURE

The man who sculpted Lara's digital norks has joined new Tomb Raider development team Crystal Dynamics as a senior designer. He created Lara, but has been missing from the series since the first game, working on Galleon. Go on Toby, sort out your girl for us, eh?

HALF-LIFE 2 DROPPING IN SEPTEMBER

Valve boss Doug Lombardi has suggested that PC Half-Life 2 is done and has already gone for mastering and duplication – which we think means putting in boxes and sticking it on shelves. No official announcement yet, but rumours point to a September release!

URBZ INVADES DS

EA is supporting DS with a barrage of titles including GoldenEye, Need For Speed, Madden NFL, and The Urbz: Sims In The City, and added fuel to the release date rumours by stating that Urbz would launch in November. The DS version will add touch-screen features, with you using your finger to cut sushi, build fireworks and gently stroke angry ferrets. Careful.

EA's commitment to DS suggests the handheld will do well in the US and UK

HANDHELD FOOTIE HEAVEN!

There was one other game on the DS title list that we got a bit excited about: Winning Eleven. That's the Japanese name for Pro Evo! Sweet! And don't worry if you're lusting after PSP: we'll eat our arse if it doesn't appear on Sony's handheld too!

Winning Eleven on DS: play on the top screen, check stats and tactics on the bottom screen!

It's official! Nintendo announced this month that DS is going to be called, um, DS. Not exactly ground-breaking news, is it?

But hey! Check out that brand new logo! It's exactly the same as the one Nintendo used at May's E3 in LA! Wow!

Okay, okay, we're taking the mick. We know you've spotted that the pics of the DS here are different to the version shown off at E3. Take a long look – that's the final, official, totally finished design for the DS. And it looks wicked, don't it? We're loving the sleek new lines, the cool black and platinum colour scheme, and the meaner-looking control pad and buttons.

In fact, we're pretty surprised at how grown-up the finished model looks. Aside from the mature colour scheme, the cutesy rounded look of the demo model has been ditched completely. This version is much thinner and when it's closed it has a slick and futuristic Metroidy look about it. No doubt about it – in terms of design, DS is much more SP than GBA. Okay?

In terms of actual feature changes, the controls have been made bigger and stick out farther from the unit, the twin speakers play stereo sound with or without headphones, and the storage slot for your stylus has been redesigned so there's less chance of you losing the little buggers.

So there you go. A couple of questions remain: when is it out and how much will it cost? Well, Nintendo has told us this is pure speculation, but the rumours say November 4 in Japan and the US at a price of around £90-£100, with a European release early 2005.

Oh, and one other question – does it look as cool as PSP? We'll leave that one up to you! ✷

DS GAME BLITZ

There are 120 DS games in development around the world, with Nintendo producing 20.

The full launch line-up is yet to be announced, but we scanned a list of 64 Japanese titles in development and among the madness (Brain Twisting Game Vol. 1 COOL104JOKER & SETLINE from Azure is, thankfully, only a working title) we turned up these gems...

ATARI, INC.
- Atari Classics

ATLUS USA
- Caduceus
- Snowboard Kids DS
- *Plus three additional titles in development*

BANDAI ENTERTAINMENT INC.
- Meteos
- Mobile Suit Gundam Seed
- *Plus one additional title in development*

CAPCOM ENTERTAINMENT, INC.
- Megaman Battle Network
- Viewtiful Joe
- *Plus one additional title in development*

ELECTRONIC ARTS
- GoldenEye
- Madden NFL
- Need For Speed Underground
- Tiger Woods PGA Tour Golf
- The Urbz: Sims In The City

HUDSON SOFT CO., LTD.
- Bomberman
- KOEI Co., Ltd.
- Dynasty Warriors (working title)
- *Plus two additional titles in development*

KONAMI DIGITAL ENTERTAINMENT
- Boktai (working title)
- Castlevania (working title)
- Dragon Booster (working title)
- Frogger 2005 (working title)
- Survival Kids (working title)
- Pro Evolution Soccer series (working title)
- Vandal Hearts (working titles)
- WINX (working title)
- Yu-Gi-Oh! Nightmare Troubadour

MAJESCO
- Moonlight Fables
- Nanostray
- *Three-plus additional titles in development*

NAMCO HOMETEK INC.
- New Mr. Driller (working title)
- Pac 'n' Roll (working title)
- Pac-Pix (working title)

ORBITAL MEDIA
- Four titles in development, including the genres of action platformer, strategy role-playing, combat racing and family

SEGA OF AMERICA, INC.
- Project Rub (working title)
- Sonic DS (working title)

SQUARE ENIX CO., LTD.
- A new story of Secret of Mana
- A new story of Slime Morimori Dragon Quest
- Dragon Quest Monsters series
- Egg Monster Heroes
- Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles series

SUMMITSOFT CORPORATION
- Air Assault 2
- Organizer Plus

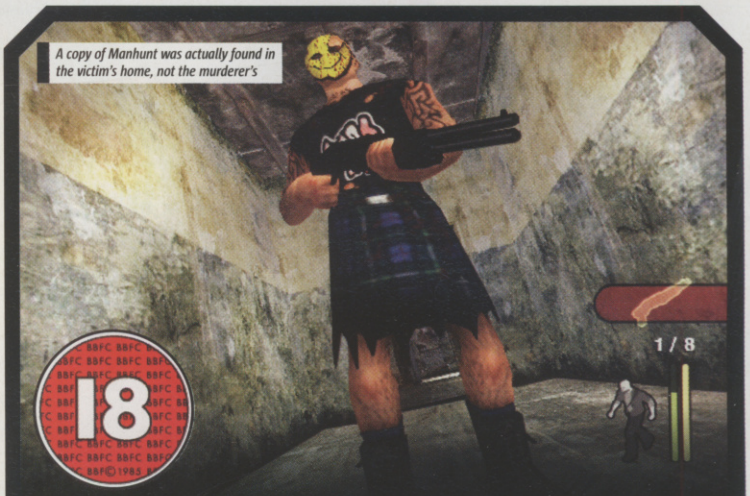
TECMO, INC.
- Monster Rancher
- *Plus one additional title in development*

TELEGAMES, INC.
- Ultimate Brain Games
- Ultimate Card Games
- Ultimate Pocket Games

THQ
- SpongeBob SquarePants
- *Plus five additional titles in development*

UBISOFT ENTERTAINMENT
- Asphalt GT
- Rayman
- *Plus additional titles in development including a major movie licence for early 2005*

VIVENDI UNIVERSAL GAMES
- Robots



A copy of Manhunt was actually found in the victim's home, not the murderer's

MANHUNT ON TRIAL

ROCKSTAR'S ULTRA-VIOLENT SNUFF 'EM UP ACCUSED OF MURDER

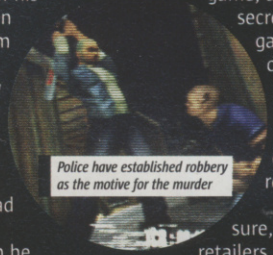
On the early hours of Thursday 26 February the body of 14-year-old Stefan Pakeerah was found in a park in Leicester. He had suffered several deep stab wounds to his torso and multiple fractures to his skull.

He was killed by one of his friends, 17-year-old Warren Leblanc, who attacked him with a knife and a claw hammer. Leblanc recently pleaded guilty to the murder in court.

After the hearing Stefan's mother, Giselle, suggested that Warren had imitated scenes from Rockstar's Manhunt when he murdered her son and said he was "obsessed" with the game.

Some sections of the press reacted angrily, with the Daily Mail's 'Murder by PlayStation' headline setting the tone for an assault on violent games.

Stefan's parents reportedly hired a US lawyer, Jack Thompson, to take legal action against Rockstar North. The publisher expressed its "deepest sympathies to those affected by these tragic events," but emphasised Manhunt's BBFC 18 certification.



Police have established robbery as the motive for the murder

We should have seen this coming. There's no denying that Manhunt is an extremely violent game, and it's no secret that thousands of gamers under the legal age of 18 will have played it – including a lot of you guys. Stefan's death is a terrible and senseless event, but is Manhunt really to blame?

We'll never know for sure, but we reckon that retailers – some of whom have removed Manhunt from their shelves, while others have reported increased sales – have to tighten up on selling age restricted games to those under 18, and that parents have to be more aware of the content of these games. But remember: games like Manhunt and GTA are rated 18 for a reason and YOU have to take responsibility for what you stick in your console. Give it some thought and tell us what you think.

WHAT THEY SAID

- **Giselle Pakeerah:** "I can't believe that this sort of material is allowed in a society where anarchy is not that far removed."
- **Jack Thompson:** "Manhunt is a public safety hazard and we are out to destroy Rockstar."
- **Rockstar:** "Rockstar Games is a leading publisher of interactive entertainment geared towards mature audiences and markets its games responsibly, targeting advertising and marketing only to adult consumers aged 18 and over."
- **ELSPA:** "Simply being in someone's possession does not and should not lead to the conclusion that a game is responsible for these tragic events."

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Is Manhunt in some way responsible for Stefan's death? Is Manhunt being made a scapegoat? Or do you think mags like CVG are wrong to promote games like Manhunt? Do you own Manhunt and are you under 18? We want to hear your opinions. Send us a letter to the usual address, or email us at mailbag.cvg@dennis.co.uk.

SONY ROCKS MODS

Sony has won a landmark court case that makes mod chips for PS2s illegal in the UK. Expect this one to run however, as a similar case in Italy ruled that customers had the right to modify hardware once they had bought it.

BALLET BEATMANIA?

What is Swanlake? It's been revealed that Konami has trademarked the name at the US patent office. Is it a game based on the famous ballet that uses motion sensors to check out your arabesques? Come on Konami, spill the beans!

CONSOLE CHAMP

Championship Manager 5

Eidos has made millions of PS2 owners rejoice with the news that Championship Manager 5 is heading to the console next spring. The famous footie management sim is also heading to Xbox, but this will be the first time the famous series has seen a PlayStation 2 release.

Playtime bullies

FIGHTING FOR SPACE ON CVG'S CONSOLES THIS MONTH

PS2 MOST PLAYED!

Pro Evo 4

The ultimate mag killer arrived in the office – and we're not talking about a massive virus to infect all our computers and prevent us from working. That's what the big boss might call Pro Evo 4, but to us it's food from the gods.

XBOX MOST PLAYED!

Fable

Acting like heroes is second nature to us at CVG, but an RPG with a quest to become the Greatest Hero of All Time? Sounds like a worthy challenge. The beauty of Fable is that every action is scrutinised and you're made to pay the consequences!

CUBE MOST PLAYED!

Animal Crossing

It seems Nintendo missed the boat on this one. It could have been massive, but in the time it's taken to see a release, that same boat has been on 50 around-the-world cruises. Better late than never? Hmm... well, maybe just.

GBA MOST PLAYED!

Mario Vs. Donkey Kong

Here's something we thought we'd never see again – an original Mario title on the GBA. This revisits the greatest grudge match in gaming history in a novel way, and keeps the series evolving. Great stuff!

PC MOST PLAYED!

Doom 3

An evil workout for the PC, Doom 3 pushes all the right buttons, with pant-messing shock moments, the sickest creatures ever to grace a computer screen and glass-shattering sound effects. Hard to believe the series has been going for a decade, but this old-timer's still got what it takes.

GTA SCREEN BLITZ

STOP PRESS

grand theft auto San Andreas

ROCKSTAR STICKS TASTY NEW SCREENS IN OUR GOB – CHOW DOWN!

It seems like it's full steam ahead in the Rockstar offices at the moment – not a day goes by without more GTA news leaked on the net, and new screens seem to be delivered just as fresh.

If the feast of San Andreas screens on page 32 isn't enough for you, then check out right here what dropped through our mailbox the day before we went to press. As these shots show off a lot of the new features that make GTA: San Andreas a super-sized treat, we knew you'd want to see them. There's everything here from how to get tattoos to the dangers of over-eating – and the need for frequent exercise if you can't keep your chicken wing consumption in check. Fingers crossed we'll have more for you next month, homes!

CJ takes a stroll into the local tat house

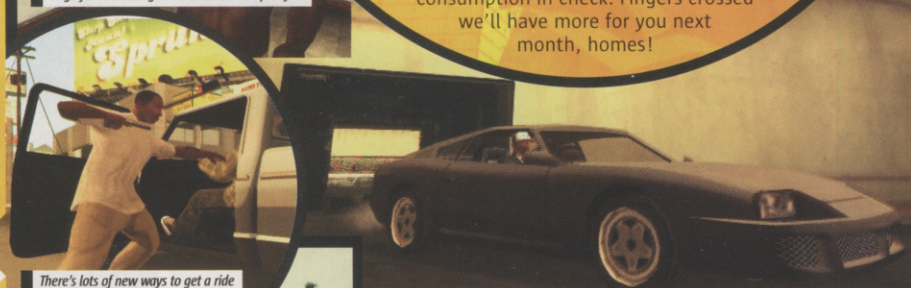
Shots like this make the wait until release worse, but in a good way!

THUG LIFE

Want to prove your gang allegiance in the streets of San Andreas, or do you just want to look gangsta without your shirt on? Whatever the reason, if you want to be a ghetto superstar you're gonna have to look the part, and getting the right tat is essential.

There are lots of designs to choose from – the more intricate the inkwork, the more expensive it is to buy

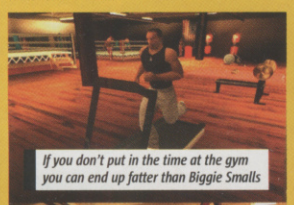
Do you pledge your allegiance to San Andreas or go for something more artistic? It's up to you



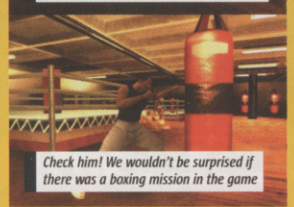
There's lots of new ways to get a ride and new animations to go with it

WORK IT OUT

If you want to burn off that extra portion of onion rings, then you better head to a gym and do some exercise – and fast. Keeping fit helps improve your stamina, strength and speed, and you'll need all three when you're on the run from the Five-0.



If you don't put in the time at the gym you can end up fatter than Biggie Smalls



Check him! We wouldn't be surprised if there was a boxing mission in the game

WANT FRIES WITH DAT?

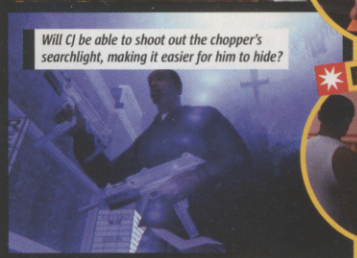
Getting fed in San Andreas looks like a lot of fun, but it also looks like you've got to watch what you eat.

Too many super-sized portions or fatty foods and CJ could erupt into a lard mountain who finds it hard to tie up his laces, let alone steal a pimped-out ride.

CHICKEN!

BURGERS!

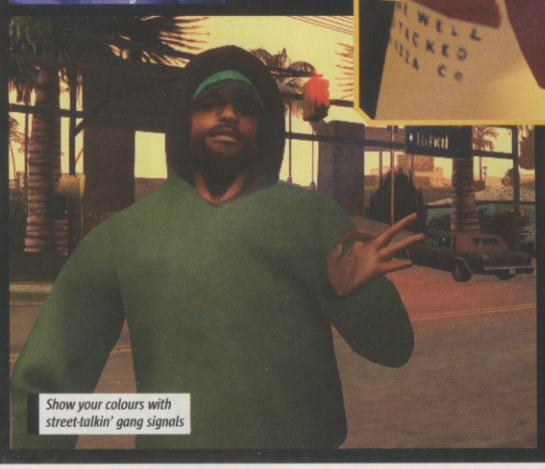
PIZZA!



Will CJ be able to shoot out the chopper's searchlight, making it easier for him to hide?

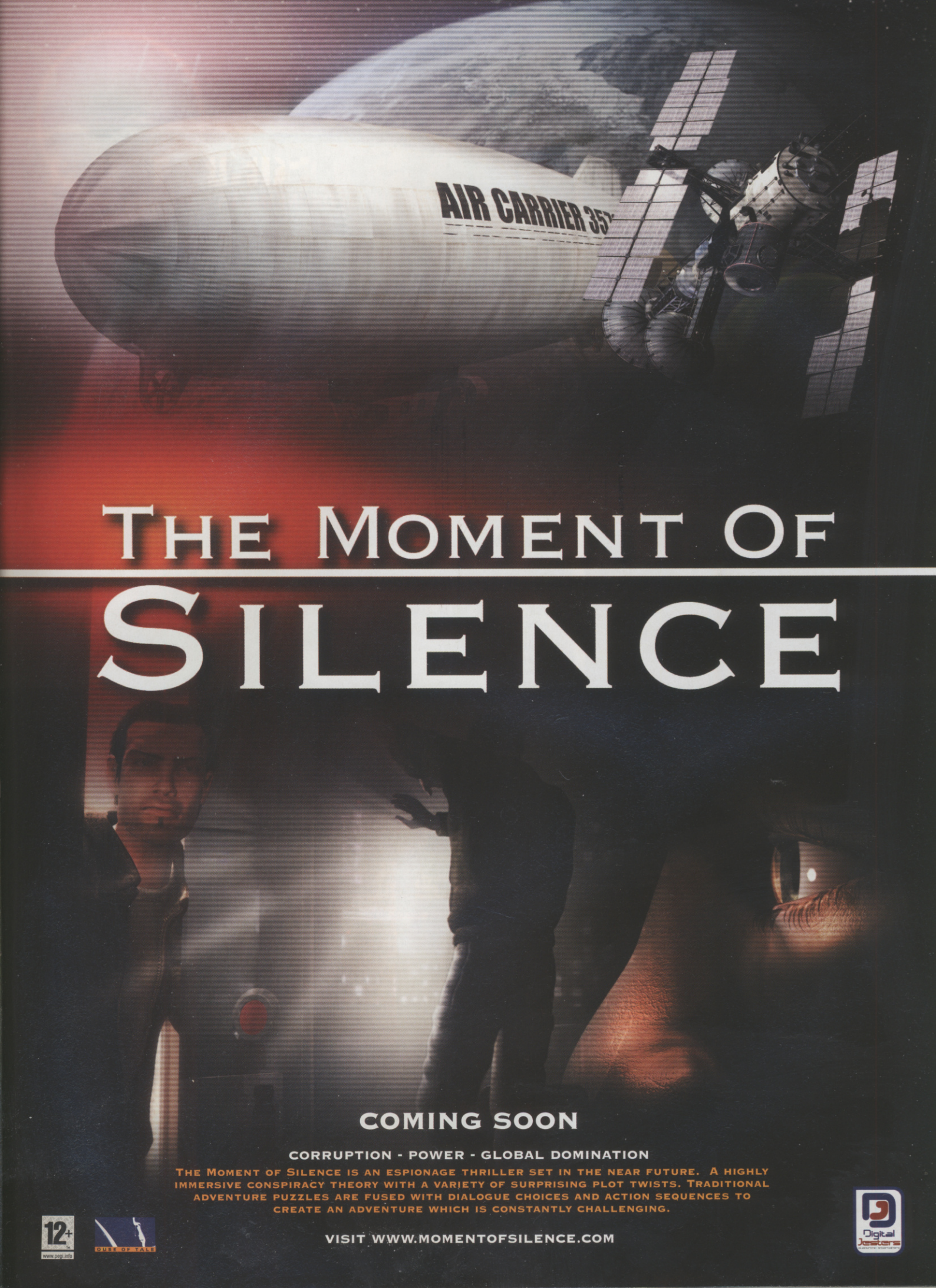
There's loads of outlets to eat in, but if you don't work out your arse gets FAT!

They'll dis' your lardy ass if you don't get down the gym and shed some poundage



Show your colours with street-talkin' gang signals

Rockstar seems to be suggesting that you'll have more luck with the ladies if you're slim



THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

COMING SOON

CORRUPTION - POWER - GLOBAL DOMINATION

THE MOMENT OF SILENCE IS AN ESPIONAGE THRILLER SET IN THE NEAR FUTURE. A HIGHLY IMMERSIVE CONSPIRACY THEORY WITH A VARIETY OF SURPRISING PLOT TWISTS. TRADITIONAL ADVENTURE PUZZLES ARE FUSED WITH DIALOGUE CHOICES AND ACTION SEQUENCES TO CREATE AN ADVENTURE WHICH IS CONSTANTLY CHALLENGING.

VISIT WWW.MOMENTOFSILENCE.COM

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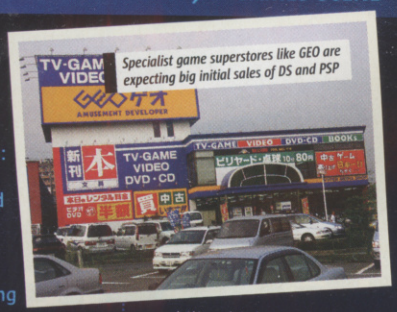
DUST OF TALE

Digital Jesters

In Big Japan

OUR MAN IN JAPAN FINDS OUT WHETHER DS AND PSP CAN RE-IGNITE A STAGNANT JAP GAMES SCENE

The big buzz in Japan right now is the same as everywhere else: – it's all about the new PSP and DS portables from Sony and Nintendo. Everyone's talking about them on the streets, in the schoolyards, in the offices – and especially in the shops.



Specialist game superstores like GEO are expecting big initial sales of DS and PSP

Nintendo and Sony haven't announced release dates yet so retailers can't take pre-orders, but they're eager to start raking in the cash. In fact, the whole industry is hoping these little babies will light a fire under the smouldering game scene and bring in some mad sales.

The release of these new portables couldn't come at a better time: the current generation of consoles is starting to look a little long in the tooth, but the next generation is still a long way off. People are starting to look for new things to do and there's definitely a feeling that PSP and DS could capture the imagination of bored gamers.

The capabilities of both systems are really quite advanced, with wireless capability, high resolution, touch screens, new media, and big dreams – all in the palm of your hand (or hands, because the PSP ain't small!). Players are eagerly awaiting the new uses for such technology; it's never happened that the basic game system could do so much out of the box.

DOOM AND GLOOM

But people also fear the dark side. Some gamers I've talked to aren't as interested as the stores would hope, and others couldn't give a monkey's about DS and PSP. The small screens won't be good enough for 3D, they say, and few companies make the 2D games they crave anymore.

Will PSP's slick design and killer games seduce Japanese gamers?

Or will the quirky features of DS touch a nerve in a deflated games scene?

Consumers are tired of ports and sequels, and of being expected to buy games they've already played. Sony isn't helping by encouraging ports of PlayStation 2 games to minimise development costs, and Nintendo already has a track record of churning out remakes.

Whatever happens, the next few months are going to be really interesting – and, we're hoping, really exciting!

Lawrence ✷

Used dealers like Hard Off are already seeing increased GBA trade-ins from gamers saving for DS

> **As far as volume is concerned, we're envisaging putting the same level of content in the PSP version as in the PS2 GT4**
>
> Kazanori Yamauchi, president of Polyphony Digital, gets us moist under the hood

XBOX 2 UNVEILED IN JANUARY?

Microsoft's next-gen monster could bare its teeth at January's CES show in Las Vegas, according to industry whispers. Microsoft head honcho Bill Gates is giving the keynote address, and he chose his appearance at CES 2001 to unveil the first Xbox. Exciting? HELL YES!

SLAMMIN' SCREENS

NBA STREET V3

BUILD A COURT THEN RULE IT ONLINE IN EA'S STREETBALL SUPERSTAR

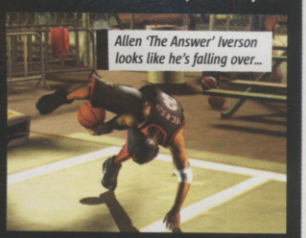
What with NBA Ballers rocking our rims this month (check out our review on page 80) we're well up for a bit of b-ball action, so when these fresh new NBA Street V3 shots slammed onto our desks we went buck wild.

See, NBA Street 2 was criminally underrated, so we're excited to see if V3 keeps up the hoop-stuffing attitude and action of the series.

We're definitely loving the smooth new look that bats the cartoony visuals of the last two games off the court. You'll be able to create your own player, customise their look, then hit the blacktop to battle against NBA legends and current stars like Kobe Bryant and Allen Iverson.

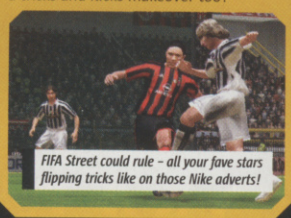
You can actually design and build your own signature court, take part in a backboard-smashing dunk contest, or (woop-woop!) play online against other ballers worldwide! Expect V3 to drop on Xbox, PS2 and GC early next year.

V3'll be stuffed with hot moves like crossovers. Ankles broken, ain't no jokin'


Allen 'The Answer' Iverson looks like he's falling over...

STREET DREAMS

Seems like NBA Street V3 might not be the only Street version of popular EA Sports games to score releases next year. We've heard rumours that Tiger Woods is getting an urban spin on his golfing series, and FIFA could be getting a tricks-and-flicks makeover too!


FIFA Street could rule – all your fave stars flipping tricks like on those Nike adverts!

FF XI GOES ONLINE IN THE UK!

FINAL FANTASY MMORPG GETS UK PC RELEASE

The US and Japan have been enjoying it for ten months already, but it's finally time for European fans to get their mitts on FF XI!

Ubisoft has announced that it'll be distributing Square's epic online RPG on PC, and the release date's been set for September 16. No word on a European release for the PS2 version, though.

Explore mountains, deserts and tundras

FF XI is set in the world of Vana'diel, a vast land chock full of over 100 areas to explore. You'll create a unique character then join one of three battling factions vying for control of Vana'diel.

You can travel across Vana'diel on Chocobos, ferries and airships

But that's not all. As a bonus for your patience the game will come bundled with two expansion packs, Rise of the Zilart and The Chains of Promathia. The latter will be released in the US and Japan simultaneously with the UK release, so you'll be on ground level with the 500,000 active worldwide subscribers as you experience the new missions, areas and secrets.

Battles are played out with a clever MMORPG turn-based system

You'll get your first 30 days free, then it's $12.95 a month. All charges are in dollars – about £7. Check back next month – we'll have the definitive verdict right here.

You'll be able to form parties with players from your own faction and even rival factions!

UPDATE!

Where's that Steve Irwin when you need 'im? The T Virus has gone mental on the crocs!

RESIDENT EVIL OUTBREAK: FILE #2

Here's a tip – if a crazy zombie virus breaks out in your town, don't go to the zoo. Even the meerkats will rip your arse off.

These screens are from the Alligator Pit level in File #2. It's out September 9 in Japan on PS2, with a UK release to follow.

File #2 continues Outbreak's team-based gameplay

A UK release date isn't confirmed but Capcom has suggested to us that it'll be online at last

THIS MONTH'S BEST RUMOUR

Jap games mags are going crazy over rumours that a PS2 remake of FFVII is in production. Square-Enix is working on an unnamed, but pretty big, project. Could it be... ?

MARIO GOES HANDS-FREE

In CVG 275 we suggested that Nintendo was getting set to release an EyeToy-style peripheral for Cube. Now news hits us that Mario Party 6 will be playable without a controller, and that Ninty has a 'surprise announcement' in store. Makes sense, eh? You saw it here first!

WE HATE WIRES

BUT WE'RE LOVING JOYTECH'S NEW WIRELESS PADS!

This month in our ongoing crusade against wires we turned our attention to our joypads. Luckily JOYTECH is about to release a new range of wireless analog controllers for Xbox and PS2. Get in!

These little beauties operate on a frequency of 2.4GHz and have a response time of 1-3Mbps, which means nothing to us but apparently the tech is also used in guided missiles. If it's good enough to blow up tanks, it's good enough for us.

We tried the PS2 one out on multiplayer Pro Evo and hardly noticed the difference – no delay, and definitely no signal drops. Then we had a good NFS Underground sesh with the Xbox pad and it performed brilliantly. The PS2 one's chunkier than a Dual Shock but not uncomfy, while the Xbox version feels identical to an official S Pad. The analog sticks are a little looser than we're used to on both pads, but it's not annoying.

We're impressed. Both pads are due out at the end of November, with the PS2 Wireless Analog Controller at £24.99 and Xbox Wireless 'Neo S' Controller at £29.99. Swing by www.joytech.net to have a look for yourself.

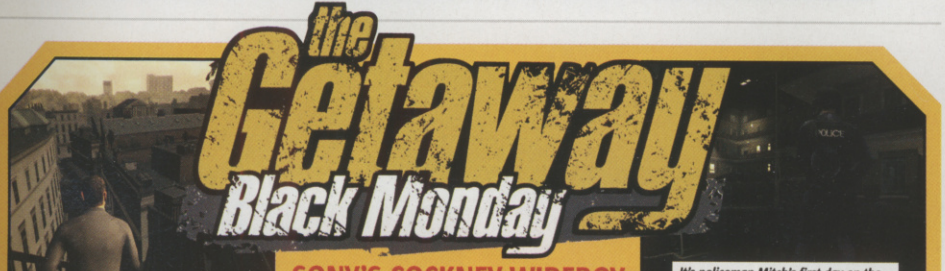
WIN WIRELESS PADS

Do you hate wires too? Our mates at JOYTECH have hooked us up with three Xbox and three PS2 wireless pads to give away! All you need to do is tell us what the technology stuffed inside JOYTECH's pads is also used for:

- A. .....Guided missiles
- B. .....Stopping cats crapping in your garden
- C. .....Pestering monkeys

Tell us which pad you want and send your answer to: JOYTECH Wireless Pad Compo, CVG, 9 Dallington Street, London, EC1V 0BQ before 23 September.

the Getaway Black Monday



PEEP THESE YOU MUPPET!

Eddie's a bare-knuckle boxer from the East End. He's hard as nails but fick as a plank

The exterior locations look much better, like this council estate. Looks like Walthamstow

SONY'S COCKNEY WIDEBOY SHOWS ITS WARES

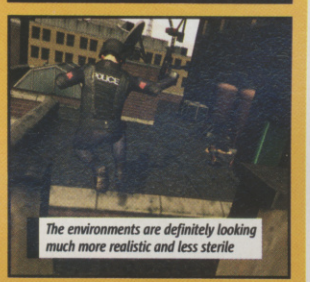
Judging by these screenshots, San Andreas is a sun-kissed vacation spot and it's really old London Town where the sh*t goes down.

Black Monday's set two years after the first game. You'll take the role of three different underworld characters as their paths entwine. London is still mapped to perfection, but as you can see from our shots the detail levels been pumped up and there are more interiors to explore.

Black Monday will kick yor fackin' 'ead in this November on PS2.

We're sure there will be nicer motors to thrash than this pile of auto arsehole

It's policeman Mitch's first day on the Met, and the crap's about to hit the fan



The environments are definitely looking much more realistic and less sterile

There are loads of real-life interior locations to explore like galleries and gyms

the HOT SEAT

CVG buckles up next to Chris Lee, Product Manager for Need For Speed Underground 2, and goes on a wild info joyride.

Q CVG: What were you most pleased with in Underground 1 and what did you want to improve on in Underground 2?

A Chris: *With Underground 1 we were most pleased with the sense of speed, the visuals, and the customisation. We followed a pretty traditional structure of race, menu, customisation, race and after a while it got a bit boring. So our biggest objective with U2 is to create a much more immersive gameplay experience.*

Q CVG: How important is tuner car culture to U2?

A Chris: *When we looked at some of the feedback from Underground we found that real tuners hated the Fast And The Furious movies. We wanted to make sure we were creating something a little more authentic than that. We focused on speaking to people on tuner magazines in the US and UK and people within car companies across the world. A lot of these guys love videogames and they were really excited about getting U2 right.*

Q CVG: How do you balance the fun gaming experience with satisfying the hardcore audience?

A Chris: *We wanted to add a little bit of glitz and glamour so you don't have to save up too much for mods, but we have added the performance stuff for U2. The real tuner guys are always tinkering with their performance setups so you can do that now, but if you're not really into that stuff you can still just buy the upgrade and feel the benefit.*

Q CVG: How unique can we make our motors in U2?

A Chris: *It's starting to become a little bit overwhelming – in U2 there is literally not a single part of the car you can't customise. We actually have so many parts in there that we're running into disc space problems.*

Q CVG: What about online stuff?

A Chris: *Every mode in the single-player game is available online, and we're working on some cool exclusively online stuff too. We're not looking at teams of racers, but you'll be able to communicate your status online better than in the first game.*

"THERE'S A BIGGER VARIETY OF CARS... OVER 30 WITH SOME NEW CLASSES"

Q CVG: Have you been influenced by stuff like Pimp my Ride and the DUB scene in the states?

A Chris: *The whole DUB scene is definitely cool. We'll be including some rims over 20" and we've got new rims doing some 'fancy' stuff.*

Q CVG: How do you feel about the approach Rockstar are taking with Midnight Club 3?

A Chris: *The DUB thing feels a little bit niche to me. The angle they're taking is novel, but the important thing is to have some substance behind it. MC was a good game and I'm sure they've improved on that.*

"YOU CAN LIVE OUT YOUR TUNER LIFESTYLE HOW YOU WANT"

Q CVG: Did we see a Cadillac Escalade in the promo video?

A Chris: *I dunno, did you? It was definitely an SUV. There's going to be a bigger variety of cars in U2. I can't go into details but there are over 30 cars with some new classes.*

Q CVG: Do you think you'll steal some of MC3's thunder with the SUV class?

A Chris: *I can say that the decision to move into different classes of cars was made when U2 was conceived, so it's not something we've just realised. If you watch MTV music videos there's a lot of big SUVs and we thought that's cool.*

Q CVG: What do you really want to give gamers with U2?

A Chris: *Having the ability to roam the landscape means the experience gets better the more you play. We wanted to take that experience and make it the most immersive car customisation experience ever. With U2 we're letting you live out your tuner lifestyle however you want.*

SMACKDOWN! VS RAW®

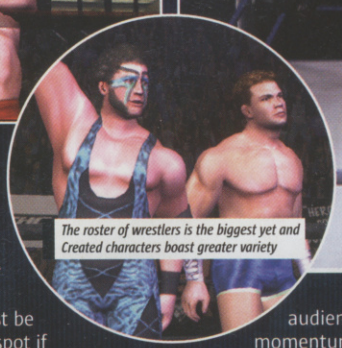
THE UNDISPUTED WRESTLING CHAMP LIMBERS UP AND STEPS INTO THE RING FOR THE ULTIMATE SHOWDOWN!

Summing up WWE SmackDown! Vs. RAW in three words is easy: MORE THAN BEFORE! That's what THQ is promising for November, when the sixth entry in the SmackDown! series hits your ass like a Bubba Bomb.

The development team is pulling out all the stops to refine the wrestling experience and create a genetically-modified grappler that'll slam the competition through the mat. From graphical makeovers to in-the-ring revisions, no polygon or line of code has been left unchecked. They've even found the time to put the legendary Andre The Giant in there!

Ric Flair demonstrates how to work the crowd and fill up the Charisma bar. Woooo!

CVG PUMPED UP, SMACKED DOWN!


The roster of wrestlers is the biggest yet and Created characters boast greater variety

The effect of extra weight has been improved, not only between wrestlers but also on weapons

BRING THE PAIN!

Ric Flair does the dirty and pokes Shawn Michaels in the eye. Breaks our heart, that

GRAPPLES AND GOLF SWINGS

In the ring there are a host of excellent new features, from seated grapples to weighted counters. Submission moves can now be reversed and are tackled in a way similar to a golf game, with swinging bars that must be stopped in the perfect spot if you're gonna bust a reverse.

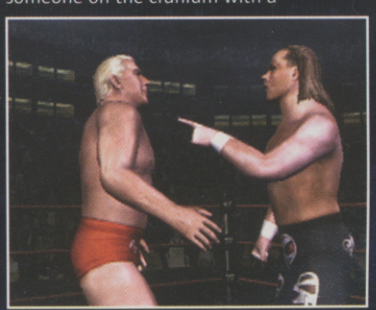
Bored of wrestlers taking their own sweet time as they mosey on down to the ring? Bouts can now start in more exciting ways, like a Test of Strength where you bash buttons to get the upper hand, a Slapping match where you smack some sense into your opponent with timed button presses, or even a Stare Down, where you square up to the punk and try to psyche him out for the early momentum.

There's also a new Charisma bar to consider. Each wrestler has a relationship with the crowd you can build by taunting them or, if you want to be a big friendly fanny, slapping their hands and pumping your fists. Get a big reaction from the audience and the momentum will shift in your favour as fans cheer or boo you. Superstars like John Cena have high Charisma ratings, whereas guys like Kane have to work for the love.

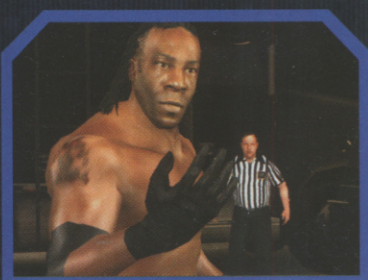
TAKE A SHOT, BLEED A LOT!

Cheap victories will be a thing of the past as all the weapons in the game are now weighted. Pop someone with a chair and it'll quickly break apart, but crack someone on the cranium with a

Forming alliances with powerful mates will help you take your pecs to the next level


One of the many new ways to kick off a ruck: a high-pressure Stare Down! Can you take it?

Following the success of Bra and Panties matches you'll see even more of the Divas. Thank the Lord!



HOW TO MAKE A WRESTLER

CVG CHEWS THE MAT WITH THQ'S NICK WLODYKA

Q CVG: How do you aim to move the series forward with SmackDown! Vs. RAW?

A Nick: *It's all about recreating the TV experience. What you see on TV is hopefully what you get in the game, from presentation through to wrestler mannerisms. There's an emotional tie when you watch wrestling. You love and hate characters. You're shocked by certain storylines. We wanted to get that emotional involvement.*

Q CVG: What new features of the game are you most proud of?

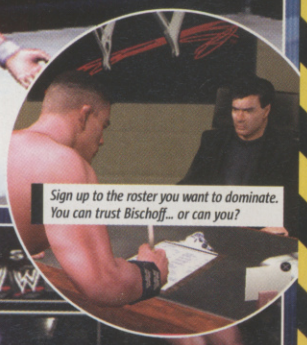
A Nick: *Most of the big stuff I can't talk about at the moment. I'm really proud of the amount of new stuff we've put into the game in such a short space of time.*

Q CVG: What was the toughest signature move to translate in the game?

A Nick: *The most challenging are the moves that intersect other body parts such as the Crippler Crossface. Getting personality into the animation is tough – but they make it a true WWE game. The great thing is that every Superstar does their moves a little bit differently.*

"CRACK SOMEONE ON THE CRANIUM WITH A SLEDGEHAMMER FOR SOME REAL BLOOD FLOW"

The wrestlers are more detailed than ever, and CAW characters look just as cool as the Superstars



Sign up to the roster you want to dominate. You can trust Bischoff... or can you?

The Heartbreak Kid connects with some Sweet Chin Music and a mean-looking Superkick

sledgehammer for some real blood flow – and the sledge stays solid!

Outside of the ring there's heaps of improvements. Two-commentator teams – including our favourite gobshites King and JC – provide play-by-play commentary. Fans of the Create-A-Wrestler feature will be blown away by the visual improvement of CAW wrestlers, and you can really customise it up with Create-a-Belt and Create-a-PPV modes!

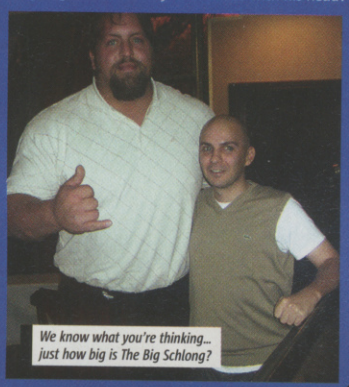
The big surprises are still under wraps. THQ's Nick Wlodkya told us the new features he's most proud of are the ones he's not allowed to talk about yet, but remember the rumours we dropped on you last month? It's not confirmed, but shout it loud: ONLINE PLAY!

NOW THAT'S BIG!

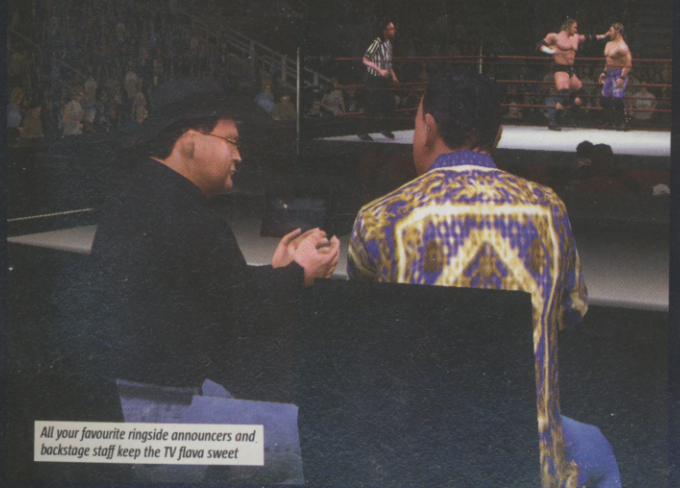
WELL IT'S THE BIG SHOW!

THQ made sure the unveiling of SmackDown! Vs. RAW was a big event by flying over the biggest wrestler of them all: The Big Show!

The sight of the 500-pound behemoth made other mags tremble with fear, but that didn't stop CVG's Alex the Hutt from getting up close and weighing Show's sweaty man boobs with his head!



We know what you're thinking... just how big is The Big Schlong?



All your favourite ringside announcers and backstage staff keep the TV flava sweet

OUTRUN 2 UNLOCKABLES

OutRun 2 on Xbox was already shaping up to be a Sega fanboy's wet dream, but the insider info we've heard is going to blow EVERYONE'S socks off. The pristine arcade conversion is going to be stuffed with unlockables, including a few special tracks inspired by other classic Sega racing games. But the real killer is an as-yet unconfirmed super-secret unlockable – a full retro game! Can you guess what it is yet?

Stranger's no slouch in the arse-kicking department – he can mix it up hand-to-hand

ODDWORLD STRANGER

THINGS ARE GETTING EVEN WEIRDER IN ODDWORLD...

The Oddworld series has been one of those funny ones you either digged or you didn't.

Stranger's totally different though, in both look and play. You'll play the role of Stranger, a bounty hunter chasing outlaws across Oddworld's Wild West frontier.The tone is just as tongue-in-cheek as ever, with lots of funny situational gags and the kind of nob and arse jokes that we can't get enough of.

But the real selling point is Stranger's weapon. He's packing a crossbow that fires wee animals. These little buggers have unique effects on enemies, like beetles who blow up, spiders who chomp baddies, or stank-assed squirrels. You'll have to scour the landscape to find your furry ammunition, and apparently you'll embark on a quest for the 'ultimate bounty'. God knows how much coconut they used to make that...

Oddworld Stranger is due early 2005 on PS2 and Xbox.

Oddworld Stranger's Wild West setting is filled with clever references and gags

Firing animal ammunition makes Stranger a kind of weird Oddworld/Pokémon combo

nationalleague PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3 final

GAME CVG KONAMI

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

BRITAIN'S BEST PRO EVO PLAYERS BATTLE TO BE UK CHAMPION!

THE HOTTEST PRO EVO SUPERSTARS: ONLY IN CVG

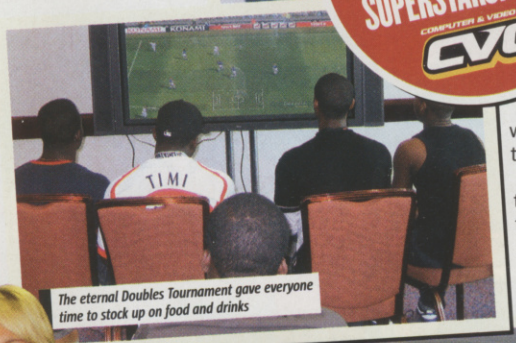
"THE LUCK WAS WITH FEMI, WHO REMAINED – INCREDIB – UNBEATEN ALL YEAR"

Forget the fruits of Jose Mourinho's summer spending spree – the biggest stars debuting at Stamford Bridge on August 7th were the finalists of the PES3 National League, proudly backed by Konami and CVG.

For the last nine months PES maniacs up and down the country have been battling to top their local league table, with the top five making it to the illustrious finals. If you've been reading our coverage you'll know how tough the competition's been, so a big congratulations to everyone who qualified.

But the competition had only just begun. The 40 qualifiers were split into eight groups of five, with the leader progressing to the knockout stages.

With a place representing the UK at the European finals in the south of France at stake, there was no time for warm-ups – and no room for error. ✷



The eternal Doubles Tournament gave everyone time to stock up on food and drinks

The brothers Padamsee join Tim Samme for a breath of fresh air on the terraces

Femi Paul and Gerry Sefah lead the laughs at the luckless London effort this year

Of course, every mighty sporting event needs be-yew-tiful ladeez

EVERYONE A WINNER

All 40 finalists took an Xbox home, courtesy of Microsoft.

In addition to that, Virgin Megastores gave £40 worth of vouchers to the qualifiers from each Group. See, if you're good at PES you get more than a pat on the back!

ROUND 1: GROUP STAGES GROUP A

1	Shui Ip	Liverpool	8
2	Osman Idris	London	7
3	Stephen Godfrey	Bath	5
4	Richard Marsh	Birmingham	4
5	Khalid El-Awel	Harrow	2

Group A was the Group of Death, with every player having finished first in their regional leagues. Our mate Os Idris went down to the wire with Shui Ip, but it was the Liverpudlian superstar who sneaked through with a classy last-ditch victory.

CVG's Pick of the Group:
Osman Idris
CVG favourite Os hadn't played Pro Evo for two weeks going into the finals – and it cost him.

Os looks calm and collected after his opening 4-1 win

"I'M YOUNG AND I'LL GET STRONGER – 2005 WILL BE THE YEAR OF OS" OSMAN IDRIS, LONDON

ROUND 1: GROUP STAGES GROUP B

1	Tach Hamthanon	Newcastle	12
2	Stuart Cronin	Edinburgh	9
3	Jonathon Francis	Cardiff	5
4	Richard Crossman	Southend	4
5	Chris Ogirri	Stevenage	1

Another tough draw, Group B saw the hottest player from the Scottish league, Stuart Cronin, and one of the faves for the title, Tach Hamthanon from Newcastle, battling it out. They ran away from the pack but brave Stuart couldn't stop the Tach Attack.

CVG's Pick of the Group:
Tach Hamthanon
We rate Stuart, but the boy from Thailand via the Toon's been unstoppable this season.

Stuart vs Tach match: dead exciting but Tach won out

"JUST GETTING THROUGH THIS GROUP IS GOING TO BE A NIGHTMARE!" STUART CRONIN, EDINBURGH

ROUND 1: GROUP STAGES GROUP C

1	Femi Paul	Harrow	8
2	Zahrin Nadzimuddin	Liverpool	7
3	Danny Loundes	Birmingham	7
4	Shaun Oliver	London	3
5	Keith Wheeler	Bath	3

Femi was one of the few people that didn't snatch a £10 voucher off our Grazza at the North Vs South tourney, but we knew he was a safe bet for this group. Zahrin and Danny ran him close though, and only a scraped draw took the Harrow lad through.

CVG's Pick of the Group:
Femi Paul
Ridiculously skilful and painfully cool, Femi's relaxed play was always going to take him far.

Femi had a constant stream of hip-hop thumping away as he played

"I'M JUST HERE TO TAKE IT EASY, HAVE FUN, AND PICK UP MY XBOX!" FEMI PAUL, HARROW

ROUND 1: GROUP STAGES GROUP D

1 Jonathon Ferdenzi	Stevenage	7 (12)
2 Nic Padamsee	Southend	7 (10)
3 Stephen Canty	Cardiff	6
4 Ho Yen Cheng	Edinburgh	4
5 Matt Holmes	Newcastle	4

One of the youngest qualifiers, but Nic Padamsee is punching way above his weight. Globe-trotting Stephen Canty (took the boat from Ireland to Cardiff to play in the league!) did well but Italian Stallion Ferdenzi's scoring power pipped the closest group.

CVG's Pick of the Group:
Nic Padamsee
Everyone expected Nic to progress but he didn't put enough chances away.

"I USED UP ALL MY LUCK IN THE FIRST GAME." NIC PADAMSEE, SOUTHEND

Nic and Stephen make friends after the wee man from Southend won

ROUND 1: GROUP STAGES GROUP E

1 Dwaine Parkes	Birmingham	10
2 Stephen Minghella	Liverpool	6
3 David Sefah	London	5
4 Mike Wheeler	Bath	3
5 Zesh Sadique	Harrow	1

We would've stuck our mums on reigning Pro Evo champ David Sefah ruling this group, but Dwaine Parkes and Stephen Minghella rose to the occasion. After beating David, big Dwaine fancied his chances. Could he do a Greece and win the lot?

CVG's Pick of the Group:
David Sefah
A sad end to the reigning champ's defence, but he took it like the gentleman he is.

"THOSE GUYS WERE JUST GETTING THE JOB DONE." DAVID SEFAH, LONDON

Big Dwaine in the Inter strip surprised everyone with his skill and power

ROUND 1: GROUP STAGES GROUP F

1 Mark Rafiee	Newcastle	12
2 Ian Wilson	Edinburgh	6
3 Vivek Rughani	Stevenage	4
4 Debo Amuda	Cardiff	4
5 Tom Crossman	Southend	3

When they weren't being distracted by hotter-than-hot score-keeper Dani, the lads in Group F were slugging it out with loads of tight results. Sunderland fan Mark Rafieeflew the flag for the Mackems though, and stormed away from the brawling pack.

CVG's Pick of the Group:
Mark Rafiee
Playing with the killer instinct and passion of a lion, it's hard to bet against Mark.

"I'M GOING TO NEED EILEEN DRURY TO HAVE ANY CHANCE OF WINNING!" MARK RAFIEE, NEWCASTLE

Mad Mackem Mark Rafiee bleeds red and white

ROUND 1: GROUP STAGES GROUP G

1 Tim Samme	Southend	7
2 Stephen Robinson	Birmingham	7
3 Vishnu Papineri	Southend	7
4 Azhan Anuar	Liverpool	4
5 Bade Ade	London	2

The fate of the group hung on the final game: Stephen v Vishnu. Both needed a win, with a draw sending Tim through on goal difference. Stephen took an early lead, but Vishnu pounced on a rebound off the post to level up and put Tim in the quarters.

CVG's Pick of the Group:
Stephen Robinson
The big man from Brum didn't deserve such a heartbreaker after some solid results.

"I'M GUTTED 'COS I BEAT THE GUY WHO'S GONE THROUGH." STEPHEN ROBINSON, BIRMINGHAM

Vishnu, Tim and Stephen after the tense final group game

ROUND 1: GROUP STAGES GROUP H

1 Ross Forsyth	Edinburgh	10
2 Tim Adegboye	Harrow	8
3 Jon Lee	Newcastle	7
4 Jamie Cottage	Stevenage	3
5 Joseph McMullen	Cardiff	0

Even score-keeper Charlotte's cheeky charms couldn't distract Edinburgh's Ross Forsyth from running rampant. An impressive run of three wins and a draw (including a comeback from 3-1 down to a 4-3 win) sent him past our hot pick, Tim Adegboye.

CVG's Pick of the Group:
Tim Adegboye
Our boy Adegboye only dropped one game but the mistake was punished by Ross.

"I'M REALLY PROUD TO BE THE ONLY SCOT IN THE KNOCKOUT STAGES." ROSS FORSYTH, EDINBURGH

Fit and nice too, Charlotte kept an eye on Group H

Femi walked off with this exclusive WE8 shirt signed by producer Seabass

Femi celebrates with his friends from London. He'd barely stopped smiling all day

THE FINAL STAGES

DWAINE CRASHES OUT TO PENALTIES

The most dramatic games in the quarter-finals were Mark Raffiee v Dwaine Parkes, and Tim Samme v Ross Forsyth. Dwaine's freaky mishaps in the first half against Mark gave the Newcastle lad a chance to take the game to penalties, whereupon Parkes had one saved and one bounce off the post. His luck had run out. Tim narrowly avoided a similar fate, scoring his winning goal in the last second of the game.

Cleary Tim's mojo was working on full strength to overcome Mark's winning streak in the Semi-Finals. And Femi's generally sunny approach to match the weather baking the turf outside helped him breeze to the finals. But neither luck nor philosophy would count in the Final itself. This was purely a battle of nerve and skill.

Femi and Tim agree not to waste half an hour sorting their formations

TWO HEADS BETTER THAN ONE FOR SCOTS

While the Semi-Finals took place, runners-up from each group formed doubles teams and competed for home pride... and a nice cup. These were extremely hard fought games, often going to penalties. Stuart Cronin and Ian Wilson said they were glad to have won something for Scotland!

FEMI PAUL: THE UNTOUCHABLE

The home crowd spurred Femi on in the finals, but Tim was no push over. Although it was 1-0 to Femi at half-time, this didn't tell the whole story, as both guys played a fast-paced passing game, with Tim looking to be the strongest in the opening minutes. Only Tim's clumsy clearance of a corner gave Femi his goal from a Henry header.

Tim got his chance to reply when an overly aggressive challenge from Femi resulted in a free kick within range. Henry skied it, but Tim made up for this with some great shots approaching half-time.

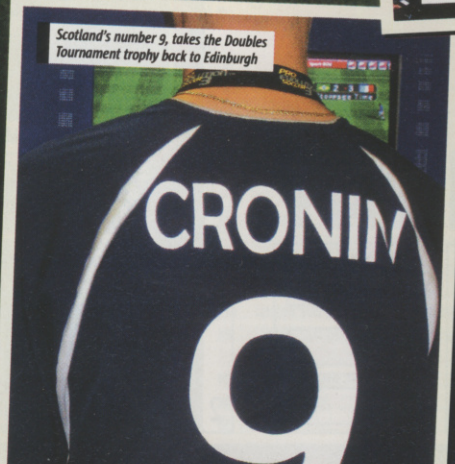
Femi almost scored another header on the whistle, putting Samme's Barthez to the test from close range. But it was still everything to play for in the second half.

In the 52nd minute, Tim palmed away a penalty after having Thuram sent off for a clumsy challenge. Then Tim's mastery of set pieces finally came to the rescue from another Henry free kick, this time scorching into the back of the net.

In the end, though, Tim's 10 men couldn't prevent Femi from making it 2-1. What's more, it was almost 3-1 after an erratic display from Tim's goalie beyond his control. And so, although the Grand Final was a perfect match of skill, the luck was with Femi, who has remained – incredibly – UNBEATEN all year in PES League.

A GOOD NIGHT HAD BY FEMI PAUL

Two sexy ladies showed up to hand out the prizes – Maxim cover models! Femi earned himself a trip to the Euro finals in the south of France, got to spend the night in Chelsea Village, an iPod and, of course, the PESLeague Cup to carry wherever with him wherever he goes. Runner-up Tim Samme also got an iPod, so it was all worth it in the end. ✶



Scotland's number 9, takes the Doubles Tournament trophy back to Edinburgh

"THEY WERE GLAD TO HAVE WON SOMETHING FOR SCOTLAND"

COMPETE IN THE PES4 NATIONAL LEAGUE

Compete in the PES4 National League! If you'd like to make a name for yourself in PES League, here's how. Starting 17 September, playable demos will be available through Virgin Megastores priced £1.99.

The cost is redeemable from the full price game when it launches in October. This demo will also be playable on pods in stores. Beat the demo to generate a code which you write down on a form to hand in, or at the website mentioned on the form. Players with the best results are entered into the PES4 National League, and away we go again! We've added another eight, yet to be announced, regional leagues for the 04-05 season, so more people can take part. Good luck!

Charts

UK TOP 20 BESTSELLERS

FIND OUT WHICH GAMES ARE FLYING OFF THE SHELVES AND WHICH ARE NOSE-DIVING INTO OBSCURITY, HOW THEY SCORED IN CVG AND WHAT WE RECKON TO THEM NOW

ChartTrack — The official UK weekly leisure software charts ©2002 ELSPA Ltd, compiled by ChartTrack, with the name ELSPA acting as a link to our website www.elspa.com

POSITION	MOVE	GAME	FORMAT/S	CVG SCORE	SUMMARY	LAST MONTH	WEEKS IN CHART
1	NEW	SPIDER-MAN 2 (ACTIVISION)	PS2 XB GC PC	84%	Free-roaming Spidey action scuttles to the top of the charts. The best superhero game in ages, all set in a wicked recreation of New York.	-	1
2	↑	DRIV3R (ATARI)	PS2 XB	64%	Bought by thousands of people who didn't read our brutally honest review. The real question is – how many copies are getting returned?	6	2
3	↑	SHREK 2 (ACTIVISION)	PS2 XB GC GBA	69%	Wayne Rooney's first videogame shoots up the charts. Hey Warner Bros dude, who says sub-standard movie licences don't sell by the shedload?	5	2
4	NEW	ATHENS 2004 (SONY)	PS2	61%	Loads of events, but for a pure Olympic-standard button-bashing workout, track down a second-hand copy of Track And Field. Work those digits baby!	-	1
5	RE ENTRY	SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW	PS2 XB PC	93%	Sam Fisher sneaks back into the charts thanks to the release of the PS2 version. Top stealth (and stubble) that'll keep you going till Chaos Theory.	-	4
6	↑	MCAFEE INTERNET SECURITY (MCAFEE)	PC	–	Stops evil, drug-crazed Communist hacker people from probing around in your PC. Necessary, but not exactly fun – a bit like wiping your arse.	7	2
7	↑	NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND – PLATINUM & XBOX CLASSICS (EA)	PS2 XB GC GBA	91%	EA's boy racer is screaming out of the shops again. Still the best street racer out there but it's about to get hosed on by its own sequel.	15	9
8	↓	HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN (EA)	PS2 XB GC GBA PC	82%	Feel Harry's burgeoning sexual frustration tent his Hogwarts' trousers as Hermione struts around in school uniform and knee-high socks. Slag.	2	3
9	↓	UEFA EURO 2004 PORTUGAL (EA)	PS2 XB PC	79%	Who's going to buy this now the tournament's forgotten like a 3am kebab? And speaking of kebabs, who the hell thought Greece would win?	3	3
10	↑	FIFA 2004 (EA)	PS2 XB GBA PSONE	79%	Offers more than Euro 2004 and doesn't become obsolete for at least, ooh, another couple of months. Still not as good as Pro Evo 3, though.	19	9
11	NEW	ONIMUSHA 3	PS2	93%	"Right, there's a guy in Paris and he gets teleported back to Feudal Japan where this other guy is fighting demons..." But, weirdly, it works brilliantly.	-	1
12	NEW	FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR	XB	92%	Intense depiction of war where every bullet has your name on it – or the name of one of the poor hicks you're ordering to their screaming death.	-	1
13	↓	PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3 – PLATINUM (KONAMI)	PS2 PC	95%	It's the grass stains on your T-shirt, the bruise on your shin, the sweat in your goalie gloves. It's the dodgy penalty spot in the Stadio da Luz. Total football.	9	3
14	↑	SONIC HEROES (SEGA)	PS2 XB GC	62%	Sega's OAP just keeps rolling on, filling lots of Japanese men's pockets with shiny gold rings that pop out when they get drunk and fall over.	17	6
15	RE ENTRY	TIGER WOODS 2004	PS2 XB GC PC	89%	Mr Woods might not be performing on the course, but his game's still holding its position on the leaderboard. New version not a fairway off, though.	6	29
16	RE ENTRY	THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING	PS2 XB GC PC	79%	Not the most complex game in the world, but by crikey it's so polished we can see our gorgeous faces in it. We'll never get bored of hitting orcs.	-	9
17	↑	SINGSTAR (SONY)	PS2	81%	They should bundle this with a crate of Stella. You'd have to be over 18, though, and if you weren't you'd miss out on some top singing laughs.	18	3
18	↓	NORTON INTERNET SECURITY 2004 (NORTON)	PS2 PC	–	We think this is a box full of chains and padlocks that you sling around your modem to stop people nicking off with it. But we could be wrong.	11	2
19	NEW	SUPER MARIO BROS	GBA	–	Old-skool platform jumping with some dude called Mario or something. Buy it new or get your NES down from the attic and play the original.	-	1
20	RE ENTRY	THE SIMS: BUSTIN' OUT	PS2 XB GC	75%	Forget about your own horrendously boring life by making crazy kids piss themselves, stink of jobbie and die of starvation. Everyone loves The Sims.	-	2

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5. Defaced or damaged vouchers will not be accepted

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whatever turns you on!

Virgin megastores

virgin.com/megastores

CVG'S MOST WANTED

1. GTA: SAN ANDREAS (PS2)
Mike: "The more I see of Rockstar's little ghetto baby, the more I'm convinced San Andreas is going to be the most impressive PS2 game ever. Boo-yah!"

2. HALF-LIFE 2 (PC)
Paul: "I can't wait to see if it lives up to the hype. Could be the most unbelievable thing EVER... or could be a full-on letdown."

3. FOOTBALL MANAGER 2005 (PC)
Graeme: "I live for Champ Man 03/04, so I'm messing my sheepskin coat about FM 2005's refinements. Sheer footie stat heaven!"

4. SPLINTER CELL: CHAOS THEORY (XB)
Alex: "Knocking out terrorists with the butt of your pistol rocks, but slitting their throats is going to be brilliant. Sam at his meanest!"

5. FABLE (XB)
Kris: "I'm a fan of Black & White, so I'm looking forward to Fable's deep moral choices. Can't wait to develop my character into a total nobhead!"

READERS' MOST WANTED

Bond, Shaun Bond, is getting shaken and stirred by new footie games, online shooters and pile-ups.

1. PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4 (PS2, XB, PC)
"Time to show my mates, once again, who's the champ!"

2. HALO 2 (XB)
"An obvious choice. Best FPS ever. I NEED Live for this... but first I need a job!"

3. FOOTBALL MANAGER 2005 (PC)
"The next footballing legend. New name and publisher, same old addictive play"

4. BURNOUT 3 (PS2, XB)
"The speed, the eye-blistering graphics, the action... makes real driving dull!"

5. RESIDENT EVIL 4 (GC)
"I don't have a GC, but I'll find someone who does to play this little beauty!"

Send us a photo of yourself and a list of the five games you're most excited about with 15 words on each explaining why.
Readers' Most Wanted, CVG, Dennis Publishing Ltd, 9 Dallington Street, London EC1V 0BQ. Email: mailbag.cvg @dennis.co.uk (subject: Most Wanted)

GO GO KATAMARI – DO THE US

Namco has confirmed that ball-rolling, high-scoring Katamari Damacy will be getting a US release in September. No announcements on a UK release yet, but we gave it 85 per cent, so we'd love to see it over here!

BATTLEFIELD BACKS OUT

The PS2 version of EA's amazing Battlefield series, dubbed Modern Combat, has been put back until late next year. The extra time will be used to stick in a single-player campaign and polish up the multiplayer.

MADDEN TOUCHES DOWN ON DS

Fat American-footballing gobshite John Madden is well impressed with the touch-screen capabilities of DS. A version of the top-notch gridiron game is in development at EA. Console versions are out in October, so could this be another US DS launch title?

RELEASE DATES

CVG BRINGS YOU THE ULTIMATE CUT-OUT-AND-KEEP RELEASE SCHEDULE. MARK UP YOUR FAVES AND KEEP THIS LIST ON YOU AT ALL TIMES...

AUGUST 2004

			I WANT IT
PC	CRUSADER KINGS	27 AUGUST	☐
PC	AIRBORNE TROOPS	27 AUGUST	☐
GBA	DIGIMON BATTLE SPIRITS 2	27 AUGUST	☐
GBA	DRAGON BALL Z: SUPERSONIC WARRIORS	27 AUGUST	☐
PC	EVERQUEST II	27 AUGUST	☐
PS2	EYETOY: CHAT	27 AUGUST	☐
XB	VULTURES	27 AUGUST	☐
PC	SEA OF EVIL	27 AUGUST	☐
PS2	HEADHUNTER: REDEMPTION	27 AUGUST	☐
XB	HEADHUNTER: REDEMPTION	27 AUGUST	☐
XB	SUDEKI	27 AUGUST	☐

SEPTEMBER 2004

			I WANT IT
PS2	FLATOUT	01 SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	FLATOUT	01 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	FLATOUT	01 SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	TERMINATOR 3: REDEMPTION	01 SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	JUICED	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	JUICED	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	JUICED	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	ARMIES OF EXIGO	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
GBA	MEGAMAN BATTLE NETWORK 4 BLUE MOON	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
GBA	MEGAMAN BATTLE NETWORK 4 RED SUN	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
GBA	MEGAMAN ZERO 3	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	THE ROOTS	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	RICHARD BURNS RALLY	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	NHL 2005	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	NHL 2005	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
GC	NHL 2005	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	NHL 2005	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
GC	WARIO WARE INC. MEGA PARTY GAMES	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	TOP SPIN	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	MYST 4: REVELATION	10 SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN	10 SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN	10 SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	FORGOTTEN REALMS: DEMON STONE	10 SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	.HACK: OUTBREAK	10 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	CREATURE CLAN	17 SEPTEMBER	☐
GBA	MARIO GOLF: ADVANCE TOUR	17 SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	CONFLICT: VIETNAM	17 SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	CONFLICT: VIETNAM	17 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	CONFLICT: VIETNAM	17 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	KNIGHTS OF HONOUR	17 SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	PSI-OPS	17 SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	PSI-OPS	17 SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	TERMINATOR 3: REDEMPTION	17 SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	TERMINATOR 3: REDEMPTION	17 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	THE SIMS 2	17 SEPTEMBER	☐
GC	ANIMAL CROSSING	24 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	CODENAME PANZERS	24 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	GULF WARS	24 SEPTEMBER	☐
GC	NEIGHBOURS FROM HELL	24 SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	NEIGHBOURS FROM HELL	24 SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	RESIDENT EVIL OUTBREAK	24 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	MEDAL OF HONOR: PACIFIC ASSAULT	24 SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	PILOT DOWN	24 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	SILENT HUNTER 3	24 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	SPECNAZ	24 SEPTEMBER	☐
GBA	STAR WARS: APPRENTICE OF THE FORCE	24 SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	SAMURAI WARRIORS	24 SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM	SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM	SEPTEMBER	☐
GC	SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM	SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	ROME: TOTAL WAR	SEPTEMBER	☐

HEADHUNTER: REDEMPTION

SLICK THIRD-PERSON SHOOTER THRILLS PERFECT FOR BOTH FANS OF THE DREAMCAST VERSION AND NEWCOMERS

BURNOUT 3

THE FASTEST RACER EVER CRASHES CLOSER TO ITS RELEASE DATE. NOT SO MUCH ROAD RAGE AS ROAD MENTAL!

HOT PICKS

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THESE SIZZLING NEWCOMERS IN YOUR LOCAL GAMES SHACK

ANIMAL CROSSING

FINALLY GETS A UK RELEASE AFTER, OOH, TWO YEARS! TA FOR GETTING YOUR FINGER OUT OF YOUR ARSE, NINTENDO...

GTA: SAN ANDREAS

MARK THIS DAY IN YOUR CALENDAR, PREPARE FOOD AND WATER – YOU WON'T BE GOING ANYWHERE FOR A WHILE

SILENT HILL 4

PROBE THE FESTERING CONTENTS OF YOUR HOME, AND SLOWLY UNRAVEL THE MYSTERY BEHIND YOUR INCARCERATION

GBA	BOKTAI 2	SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	CRISIS ZONE	SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	S.T.A.L.K.E.R	SEPTEMBER	☐
GC	WWE DAY OF RECKONING	SEPTEMBER	☐
GBA	FINDING NEMO: THE CONTINUING ADVENTURES	SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	WARHAMMER 40,000: DAWN OF WAR	SEPTEMBER	☐
GC	WWE DAY OF RECKONING	SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR	SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	SECOND SIGHT	SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	SECOND SIGHT	SEPTEMBER	☐
GC	SECOND SIGHT	SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	DOOM 3	SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	GHOST RECON 2	SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	GHOST RECON 2	SEPTEMBER	☐
GC	GHOST RECON 2	SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	SHELLSHOCK: NAM '67	SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	SHELLSHOCK: NAM '67	SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	SHELLSHOCK: NAM '67	SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT	SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT	SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT	SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	THE DUKES OF HAZZARD: RETURN OF THE GENERAL LEE	SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	THE DUKES OF HAZZARD: RETURN OF THE GENERAL LEE	SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	COMBAT ELITE: WWII PARATROOPERS	SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	COMBAT ELITE: WWII PARATROOPERS	SEPTEMBER	☐

OCTOBER 2004

			I WANT IT
PC	FORD RACING 3	01 OCTOBER	☐
PC	MEDIEVAL LORDS	01 OCTOBER	☐
PC	MOMENTS OF SILENCE	01 OCTOBER	☐
PS2	STARSKY & HUTCH 2	01 OCTOBER	☐
PC	STARSKY & HUTCH 2	01 OCTOBER	☐
PS2	KNIGHT RIDER	01 OCTOBER	☐
PS2	MIAMI VICE	01 OCTOBER	☐
GBA	POKÉMON FIRE RED	01 OCTOBER	☐
GBA	POKÉMON LEAF GREEN	01 OCTOBER	☐
PC	SHADE: WRATH OF ANGELS	01 OCTOBER	☐
PC	MEDAL OF HONOR: PACIFIC ASSAULT	01 OCTOBER	☐
PS2	AQUANOX	08 OCTOBER	☐
XB	AQUANOX	08 OCTOBER	☐
GC	DONKEY KONGA	15 OCTOBER	☐
PS2	GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS	22 OCTOBER	☐
PC	WARTIME COMMAND	23 OCTOBER	☐
PC	COSSACKS 2	29 OCTOBER	☐
PC	SNIPER ELITE	29 OCTOBER	☐
XB	BROTHERS IN ARMS	29 OCTOBER	☐
PC	BROTHERS IN ARMS	29 OCTOBER	☐
PS2	100 BULLETS	OCTOBER	☐
XB	100 BULLETS	OCTOBER	☐
PS2	PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4	OCTOBER	☐
XB	PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4	OCTOBER	☐
PC	PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4	OCTOBER	☐
PS2	FIFA 2005	OCTOBER	☐
XB	FIFA 2005	OCTOBER	☐
GC	FIFA 2005	OCTOBER	☐
PC	FIFA 2005	OCTOBER	☐
PS	FIFA 2005	OCTOBER	☐
GBA	FIFA 2005	OCTOBER	☐
PS2	CLUB FOOTBALL 2005	OCTOBER	☐
XB	CLUB FOOTBALL 2005	OCTOBER	☐
PC	CLUB FOOTBALL 2005	OCTOBER	☐
PS2	DEAD TO RIGHTS	OCTOBER	☐
XB	DEAD TO RIGHTS	OCTOBER	☐
PS2	JAK 3	OCTOBER	☐
PS2	KILLZONE	OCTOBER	☐
PC	EVIL GENIUS	OCTOBER	☐
PS2	FIGHT CLUB	OCTOBER	☐
XB	FIGHT CLUB	OCTOBER	☐
PS2	LEISURE SUIT LARRY: MAGNA CUM LAUDE	OCTOBER	☐
XB	LEISURE SUIT LARRY: MAGNA CUM LAUDE	OCTOBER	☐
PC	LEISURE SUIT LARRY: MAGNA CUM LAUDE	OCTOBER	☐
PS2	NBA LIVE 2005	OCTOBER	☐
XB	NBA LIVE 2005	OCTOBER	☐
GC	NBA LIVE 2005	OCTOBER	☐
PC	NBA LIVE 2005	OCTOBER	☐
XB	TOTAL CLUB MANAGER	OCTOBER	☐

RELEASE DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

You're all pussies and I love nothing more than whipping lame gamer butt

Ed Zed's House Of Pain

Lock 'n' Load – Ed Zed's gonna gun you down!

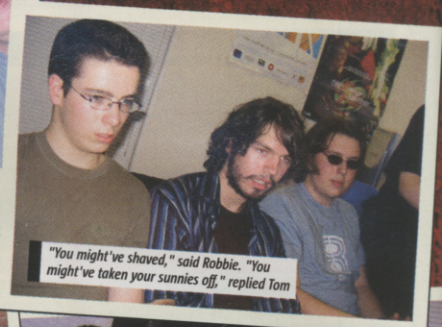
TOM 'HEY GRINGO' O'BRIEN
THE GOOD

TIM 'NOT NICE OR DIM' KELLEHER
THE BAD

ROBBIE 'MAYBE NOT' MAY
PIG UGLY

YEEHAW!
This month Ed 209's been greasing his six-shooters with Rockstar's Wild West epic shooter, Red Dead Revolver

Stop your snivellin' and drop your linen – it's time to take it like a man


"You might've shaved," said Robbie. "You might've taken your sunnies off," replied Tom

Holy cock, it looks like the school disco. Now the humiliation is complete

CVG's Games Gimp looks down on the losers like they're sh*t on his kickers

We nearly deducted points from Tom for his rubbish effort at a Clint Eastwood sneer

KEEP THE CHALLENGES COMING, FOOLS

October's House Of Pain has a cowboy lilt, with CVG's Games Gimp taking on varmints at Red Dead Revolver.

The rootin' tootin' shooter's got a simple goal – you get dollars for each kill, and the winner is the first deadeye to reach $3,000!

Next month: fresh meat!

There's been no shortage of CVG readers lining up to spank Ed Zed, our very own Games Gimp.

So when three amigos Tom, Tim and Robbie moseyed on down from the Wild West of London we smothered Ed in talc, stuffed him into to some PVC chaps, and set him loose on their gunslingin' asses. The rules were set – five games of bounty hunter free-for-all. The sharpshooter with the most games in hand wins the challenge – the gimp's out, his gun's loaded, and he's ready to whip ass!

"HAH! Your ass is mine!" Robbie's chat up lines always worked down the cowboy bar

GAME 1 – TWIN ROCKS, THE ANCIENT MONOLITH

It's high noon, and the gunners get ready. Tom got the hang of the controls first and swung 'round the corner to take out Tim and Robbie in a flash. "YEEHAW!" screamed Ed as he rolled out from behind a rock and Deadeye targeted Tom's limbs, before takin' him down. Robbie and Tim teamed together in an evil alliance against Ed, but the dastardly Games Gimp put them all six feet under! Mess with the best, die like the rest in the Wild West. **Ed 1, Challengers 0**

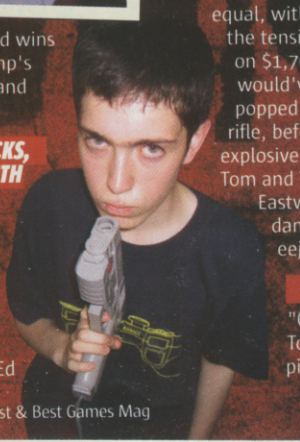
If you think The Gimp looks messed-up crazy here, you should see him when he's angry

GAME 2 – THE GIANT FORTRESS

Outta nowhere came Robbie armed with flaming fire-arrows. Tom and Tim struggled through the inferno, but Ed was nowhere to be seen. "You arse!" Tom screamed, as Robbie loaded him with arrows and racked up $2,600. Tom and Tim looked weak at $1,400, but Ed, who had taken the helm on a huge Gatling gun hidden atop the fortress, suddenly went on a Wild Bunch killing spree. Spitting lead, he racked up more kills than these boys'd had hot bean dinners, and went from $10 to $3,000 in less than a minute. KER-CHING with the bling! **Ed 2, Challengers 0**

GAME 3 – THE DESERT BADLANDS

This was an all out war – the scores were equal, with even Ed sweating bullets as the tension saw all four cowboy equal on $1,700 each. If Ed had a hat he would've tipped it when Robbie popped his melon with a piercing rifle, before calmly grabbing his explosive shotgun and waxing both Tom and Tim at the same time like Clint Eastwood in Untouchable. Then he danced like a goddarn redneck eejit. **Ed 2, Challengers 1**



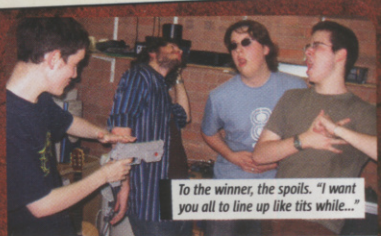
GAME 4 – THE MINE

"OH GOD!" screamed Tim as Tom grabbed a deadly poison pistol and destroyed all three opponents at once. Ed persevered, but found himself being hunted down by a ruthless Robbie, who fragged the crap out of him and left our champ with chump change. A few kills later, Robbie was at $3,000 and Ed was at a mere $1,000. Is it Boot Hill for our Games Gimp? **Ed 2, Challengers 2**

No wonder he's smirking – it's the first time we've let him out of the cupboard for a month

GAME 5 - THE GHOST TOWN

"A High Noon showdown in a ghost town," said Ed, "The perfect way to end this." Before it even started Tim – the lowdown varmint – was already asking what he'd won. It started badly for Ed, with Robbie gaining an early lead via a clever use of Deadeye. But from the shadows came the champ's trump card – with the right power-up, he reversed their controls like they'd been on the moonshine! "WHAT THE HELL?" cried Tim as Ed grabbed the Gatling gun and tore them to pieces. Bwoys, he done kick your ass. **Ed 3, Challengers 2**


To the winner, the spoils. "I want you all to line up like tits while..."

MUST...SHOOT...FASTER

Shucks! These cowboys just weren't up to Ed 209's standard, and he taught 'em a lesson in the only way he knew how.

Greased up good 'n' proper, we've locked him away for another month, gibbering wildly to himself about talcum powder and stroking himself into a frenzy over his victory. The tit.

SPANK OUR GAMES GIMP

Ed's back in the cupboard for another month. He squealed and wriggled a bit, but it was nothing our cosh-and-chloroform combo couldn't take care of.

Come on then! We know you want to smell the sickly-sweet scent of stale latex as the Games Gimp bends you over his knee and hammers you royally! Or can you apply the spank to Ed's ass? Send in the form and let's kick off on Doom 3!

REMEMBER YOU'VE GOT TO BE IN IT TO WIN IT!

★HELLO, MY NAME IS: ..... [nickname] [age]

★BUT YOU MUST CALL ME ..... ★AND I'M ..... [game name]

★I AM THE BEST AT: .....

★MY ADDRESS IS: .....

★DAYTIME TELEPHONE NO: ..... ★EVENING TELEPHONE NO: .....

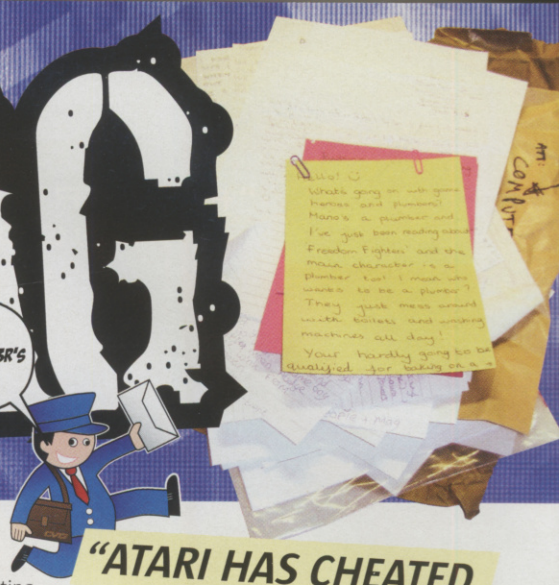
★EMAIL: .....

Send to: CVG Reader Challenge, CVG magazine, Dennis Publishing, 9 Dallington Street. London, EC1v 0BG

"PREPARE FOR SOME DEVILISHLY GOOD ENTERTAINMENT..."
TOM FOX - FILM REVIEW
HELLBOY
12A CONTAINS MODERATE FANTASY VIOLENCE AND HORROR
FROM THE DARK SIDE...TO OUR SIDE
AT CINEMAS SEPTEMBER 2

EMAIL US AT: MAILBAG.CVG@DENNIS.CO.UK

MAILBAG



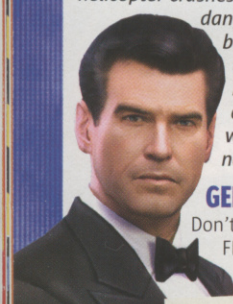
Fancy £150? Talk to us! Send your thoughts to: Mailbag, CVG, Dennis Publishing, 9 Dallington Street, London, EC1V 9BQ.

DIE ANOTHER DAY

Will you actually meet Bond in GoldenEye: Rogue Agent? I guess he could be like a recurring boss or something, or maybe the final boss? But if he was it would be pretty crap because he couldn't exactly die... or could he? I'm a bit scared now. I need more caffeine.

Hodgkiss, email

CVG You'll meet him in the first level! You fly into Fort Knox with him but your helicopter crashes. You escape, he's left dangling from the side of a building. What do you do? PUSH HIM OFF! Mwahahaha! You're evil, remember? Don't worry though, Bond never dies...



GENRE BENDER

Don't you think that a FPSRPSOPSEUFRDFF game would be really good? It wouldn't have to be complicated, but I reckon a First Person Shooter, Role Playing, Simulation, Online, Platform, Sneak 'Em Up, Free-Roaming, Driving, Fighting and Flying game would really plug a gap in the market. Or something a bit like Pac-Man would be good.

Jake, email

CVG We fancy a FPISS (First Person in Space Shooter), or maybe a FPISSFLAPS (First Person in Space Shooting Fighting Leg and Arm Simulator). Or something like Space Invaders. In Space.

DON'T KICK DEAF PEOPLE

I'm joint leader of an Xbox Live clan called 'Die as One'. We currently have two very important members of our clan who happen to be deaf. One of the biggest problems they face on Live is that they get kicked out of a game because they don't use a microphone. People think they don't have a mic or are just being rude. It's a real problem for them and puts them off playing on Live. Then the other day we thought up an interesting idea: why doesn't Live have an icon to make other players aware that someone is deaf? It might not stop them getting kicked, but at least they'd have a fighting chance.

Crafty Nigel, email

CVG That's a great idea, but unfortunately deaf people probably would still get kicked. Surely a keyboard communicator would be a better option. Since Microsoft has a good reputation for catering to hard-of-hearing customers and with Xbox Live hitting one million users, it might not be an impossibility. Microsoft support www.deafgamers.com, a UK website especially for – you guessed it – deaf gamers. Check it out!

TEN COMMANDMENTS

I've made a list of the top ten gaming clichés:

1 Violent games are always blamed for the downfall of society, and that really makes me want to kick some arse.
2 Black characters are always sidekicks, and they're always programmed to talk jive, yo.
3 If an EA game is successful it will receive limitless sequels. If it's unsuccessful it'll only get seven or eight.
4 Classics like Ico are ignored in favour of tripe like The Suffering.
5 Developers always claim their AI is revolutionary, usually as an NPC headbutts a wall. Repeatedly.
6 New systems will dramatically drop in price after a few months to annoy impatient people.
7 RPGs always have a female princess/sorceress with massive jugs who knows a few tricks, and a strong bloke who kicks arse for fun.
8 Your character in an FPS game has no feet.
9 Photo-realisitc film characters in games always look like burns victims.
10 Games programmes on TV are aimed at nine-year-olds.

Disco Stu

Disco Stu didst stand atop Mount CVG and proclaim the ten commandments

CVG And lo, the Ten CVG Commandments were chiselled into stone. Got any suggestions we could add? Send 'em in!

SMELLS LIKE...

Has GTA San Andreas even been released as a demo yet? My bro says his mate has it on a demo disc. Please tell him it's BULLS**T

Jon, Text

CVG Yeah, we gave it away in this issue. It's on page 100, go check it out. Unless the newsie nicked it, or, like your bro's mate, we're talking out of our ARSE.

DRIV3R

I am one of the many people who made a bad mistake buying Driv3r. I couldn't believe I'd spent £40 (thanks to your £5-off voucher) on such absolute cack. This made me think why I bought it in the first place. It all seemed so promising: the cool TV advert and especially the good reviews that appeared in a couple of mags. It MUST be good. But it wasn't. Atari brainwashed us into buying the goddamn thing. Did they realise that the game was so bad that they'd have to spend all their money on

"ATARI HAS CHEATED THOUSANDS OF PEOPL INTO BUYING A WORTHLESS PRODUCT"

CVG STINKER

CASUAL CONFUSION

A couple of points: you referred to San Andreas as "this year's biggest gaming event". I'm as hyped about it as the next person but surely stuff like Doom 3, Half-Life 2, The Sims 2, Everquest 2, Fable, Rome: Total War, S.T.A.L.K.E.R. and the European release of Final Fantasy XI are slightly more important than the second choice of casual gamers (first being Pro Evolution Soccer)?

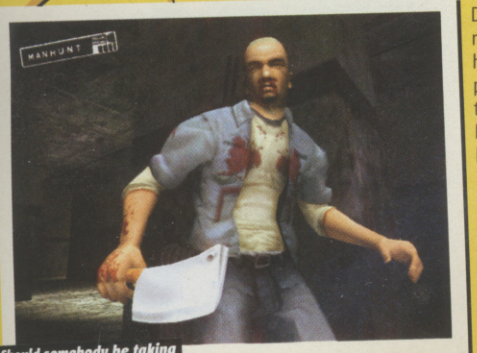
King Reefer, email

CVG Wuech... blach... sorry, we're still choking on our crisps about that PES comment. First choice of casual gamers? Isn't there a wee game called FIFA that consistently outsells it? And yeah, those other games are huge titles, but COME ON! It's San Andreas! Just because it sells loads that doesn't mean it's for casual gamers. The whole GTA series is well-designed, fun to play, and stacked with original ideas. Recognise: SA is 2004's biggest gaming event!

CVG STAR LETTER

VIDEOGAME VIOLENCE ON TRIAL

WIN £150!



Should somebody be taking responsibility for Manhunt's violence?

Did Manhunt really make a 17-year-old kill his friend? I think not. I play violent games all the time and I have not killed anyone. The boy himself must have had it in him in the first place – maybe the game merely gave him the idea of the methods. If he had not got inspiration from Manhunt then he would have found it in a film or a book or anywhere else. Violence is all around us. If Manhunt is banned nothing will be achieved except the loss of a good game. The boy killed his friend. The game is just an excuse.

Michael, Nottingham

CVG *Great points, Michael. To be honest, we're surprised it's taken this long for a Manhunt scare story (see p7) to surface. While the death of Stefan Pakeerah is a truly tragic event, and Manhunt is a truly violent game, it must be remembered above all that the game is intended for adults over 18. There's no conclusive research proving a link between violence and games, and the vast majority of people who play 'em aren't turned into murderers. People in awful circumstances look for explanations, and sadly those reasons become amplified and often distorted when mainstream media spins out a 'silly season' story.*

WINNER

cex

■ Star Letter-writers win £150 to spend at CeX. CeX is the place to trade in your old games, DVDs and consoles for new ones, or sell them for unbeatable cash pay-outs. With games starting from £3, the winner could get 50 games! Check out www.cex.co.uk for more info.

publicity. I feel that Atari has committed a crime because they've cheated thousands of people into buying a worthless product. It's taught me one thing though: always consult CVG before buying!

Justin, Cheltenham

CVG *It's a damn shame that so many people went out and bought Driv3r before they'd read our review (or read questionable reviews in a couple of mags and websites) but we shouldn't really blame Atari. They had to make sure the game sold well, whether it was good or not. You're right on one thing, though: always consult CVG before buying. We pointed out the problems months ago and we got it spot on.*

IMPORTS ARE IMPORTANT

Having played Camelot's Everybody's Golf on PSone I was really looking forward to Mario Golf on Cube and GBA. To my surprise the Cube version didn't come out in the UK for six months after the US version, and the GBA game isn't out until September even though you can get it in the US right now. I've contacted a few game importers but they've told me that due to legal issues with Nintendo they were unable to import the games for me. Why does Nintendo kick up such a big fuss about imports when they take so long releasing titles in the UK? Is it any wonder GameCube is struggling?

Stu, email

CVG *Microsoft and Sony don't exactly promote imported games, and with Sony winning that chipping court case (see Planet CVG p8) things are going to get a lot tighter, but at least they don't hold back games as long as Nintendo. Christ, what about Animal Crossing? It's been out pretty much everywhere except here for TWO YEARS and it only just got a UK release date! It's definitely a mistake, especially when Cube fans are so loyal to the games they love. Sort it out Ninty!*

SET TRIPPIN'

Has anything been announced yet on whether San Andreas will appear on Xbox and PC? I also don't understand your scoring system – why do you have all those sub-categories when the overall score isn't the average of those scores? Great magazine though – keep it up!

Johnny Gibbins

CVG *Nothing's been announced, but Vice City came out seven months later on PC, and a year and a month later on Xbox, but expect both delays to drop. We'd say Christmas. Our scoring system's not a mean average because we add more weight to Gameplay and Lasting Appeal.*

KISS MY FACE!

Ever wondered who developers base their characters on? I'll tell you who: me! Look at my picture and check out Henry Townsend from Silent Hill 4. What do you think?

Shaun Roberts, Stoke-on-Trent

CVG *Good work fella. Does anyone else look like a game character? Best one wins a prize!*

Shaun Roberts, Stoke: bloody nice bloke who looks like game character

"MURDER BY PLAYSTATION? I'M SORRY, BUT THAT'S B*LL*CKS!"

SHORT & CURLIES

CHOPPED UP, SHIPPED OUT

■ I think DS will win hands down. Sony think they can win the audience by constantly increasing power whereas Nintendo keep innovating and trying new things – then milking them to death!
Milking them to death... that gives us an idea for the DS Harvest Moon game...

■ How come there's no PlayStation Experience this year? Has it been cancelled?
Because you broke all the games and made the place smell like rat piss. And Sony wants to take a year out.

■ Why no OutRun 2 on Cube, the console for REAL old skool gamers! XBox sux.
You've got a point until the last two words. You sux. Suck.

■ Will Front Mission 4 get a UK release?
It's officially unconfirmed, but our sources suggest that it's on the way...

■ Congrats, your review of Disgaea persuaded me to buy this AMAZIN' game. Nice one CVG.
We do our best...

■ What's happened to Perfect Dark 0 and when will it come out?
We asked Rare at a recent press conference and they vanished in a puff of smoke. Poof!

■ Somebody stole my CVG Issue 274 and I never even got the chance to read it! Can anyone sell me their copy?
We've got a few in the office. Fifty quid, you can have two.

■ You're right, monkeys are ace.
We knew it! Meerkats?

■ Give us scores for storylines.
But 90% of 'em are utter arse.

MAILBOMBS!

Fibrous gaming jobbies blocking up CVG's topic toilet:

■ Manhunt: Is it responsible?
■ San Andreas: For casual gamers only?
■ Gaming lookey-likeys: Are you the spit of a games character?
■ Driv3r: Did you return it or did you dig it?
■ Ten Commandments: Got any golden gaming rules?

EMAIL US AT: MAILBAG.CVG@DENNIS.CO.UK

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DENNIS PUBLISHING LTD, 9 DALLINGTON STREET, LONDON EC1V 0BQ
This month going straight to Hell, not passing Go...

Editor ..... Alex Simmons
Managing Editor ..... Peter Walker
Games Editor ..... Mike Cooper
News Editor ..... Graeme Boyd
Art Editor ..... Jaime Smith
Senior Designer ..... Kris Barratt
Contributing Editor ..... Paul Davies
Online Section Editor ..... Stuart Bishop

CONTRIBUTORS
(Words) Matt Wales, Steve O'Hagan, Alex The Hutt, Ed Zed, Jamie Sefton, Will Porter, Stephen Daultry
(Subbing) Rosanna Negrotti
(Illustration) Nishant Choksi
(Design) Mike Newson
(PDFs) Gareth Lowndes

CVG Editorial ..... 020 7907 6565 (Fax 020 7251 8233)
Subscriber Enquiries ..... 01454 642443 or cvg@cisubs.co.uk
Online Subscriber Service ..... www.subsinfo.co.uk
Senior Production Executive
Robin Glover 020 7907 6059
Production Controller
Nicky Baker 020 7907 6056
Group Sales Director
Ian Westwood
Games Group Advertising Manager
Mandy Critchley 020 7907 6670
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PS2 | XBOX | NINTENDO GAMECUBE | PC CD ROM

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

GAME INFO: COST: TBC
PLAYERS: 1-4

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: ELECTRONIC ARTS
- DEV: EA BLACK BOX
- WWW.NEEDFORSPEED.COM
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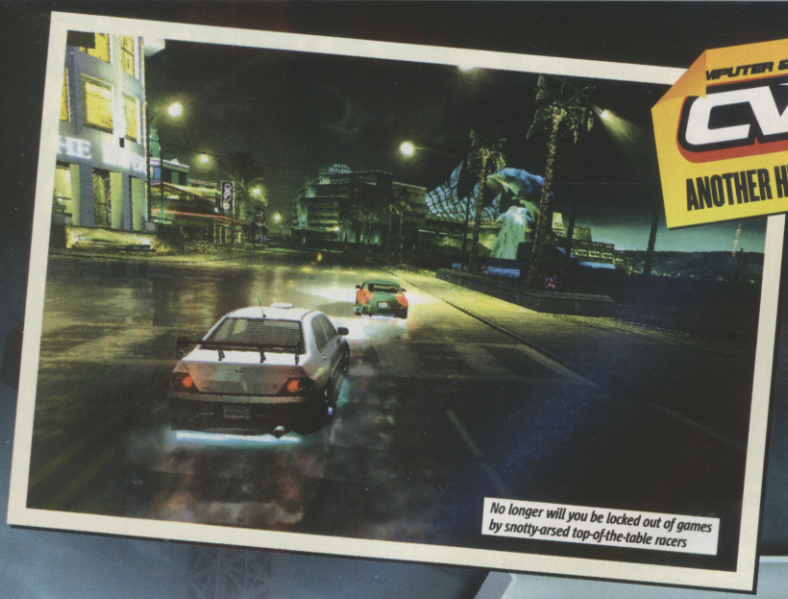


No longer will you be locked out of games by snotty-arsed top-of-the-table racers

COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES CVG ANOTHER HUGE EXCLUSIVE

NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2

EA's nitrous-fuelled tarmac rockets is going deeper underground. You ready for more cars, more mods, more girls and more CVG scoops?

Souped up? Tricked out? Hell no. We could tell you that EA has rolled Need For Speed Underground 1 into the garage, bolted on a few cheap modifications, given it a fresh lick of paint, and shoved it back on the street.

We'd be lying. This isn't Pimp My Ride, where some shed gets a ridiculous makeover spunked onto its rusty chassis. The first Need For Speed Underground was a nitrous-for-blood, thoroughbred street beast, but NFS Underground 2 is a whole new breed altogether.

EA has traded in the first Underground for a brand new model pumped with more power under the hood and more bling on the bodywork. Sure, they've remembered the things that made the first game the most successful street racer yet, but they're also not afraid to take the series in a whole new direction.

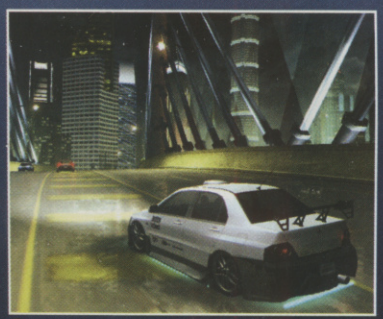
That direction is up to you. Underground 1's sequential race structure is on the scrapheap, and a new free-roaming city has been unveiled. It's called Bayview, and like we told you last month, it's frickin' MASSIVE: we're talking over 200 Ks of tarmac slicing through five unique-looking neighbourhoods!

There's a real change of feel between the areas – this is the leafy suburban area

UNDERGROUND TOUR

Believe us – it's going to take you a long time to tear up every inch of Bayview. Think Vice City times three – we drove from the depths of the industrial zone at one end of the map, to the soaring radio tower on top of the exclusive suburban district at the other end, and it took us five minutes. Not impressed? Well, when we say drove we really mean RAZZED, wheels screaming and nitrous spitting along the high-speed freeway system, with hundreds of roads and alleyways snaking away from both sides of our howling Mitsu Evo. Now that's BIG.

But it's not just size that matters. Each of the five areas has a distinct atmosphere and character. The dirty and deserted Industrial area's grimy straights are perfect



You'll have even more freedom to make your motor as outrageous or as subtle as you want

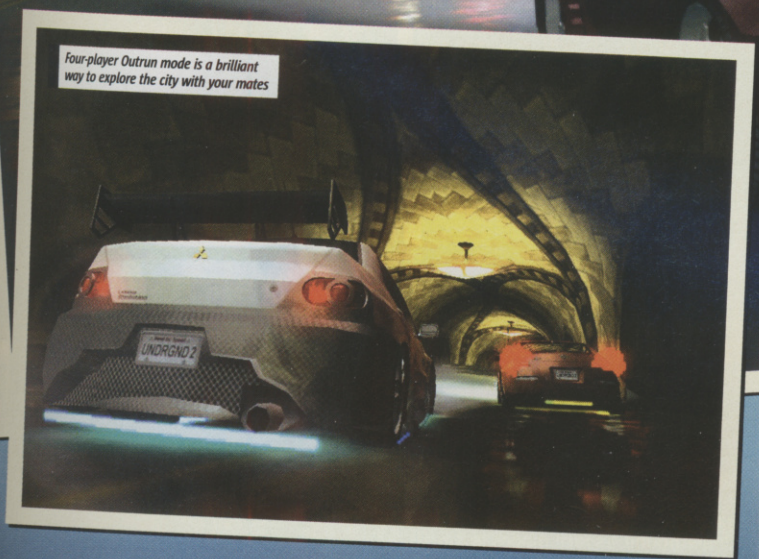
Street racing is cool as ice underpants, and U2 captures the atmosphere brilliantly

LADY OF THE NIGHT

Don't feel weird about fancying the girl on our cover – she's a real model called Brooke Burke, and she's fit as fook. She plays Rachel in U2, your guide through the underground and hopefully your personal suspension tester too...

"You can pull a donut, flip a 360° and head back for more. You're free!"

Neon plays a bigger part in your visual style in U2. You can stick it almost anywhere!



Four-player Outrun mode is a brilliant way to explore the city with your mates

for tarmac-chewing drag races and drift showdowns. The Old Town's crisscrossed with narrow streets and abrupt 90° turns perfect for bumper-to-bumper dashes. The glitzy Downtown district's wide boulevards and fat curves are spot on for high-speed circuit racing. The Waterfront's winding streets and numerous Freeway onramps make for some intense Outrun encounters, and the Suburban district's steep, winding streets are a mecca for downhill drift fanatics, one of NFSU2's new game modes.

We haven't seen any evidence of car damage yet, but EA promise us it'll be in there

The free-roaming structure is also a welcome change. Underground 1 took place exclusively on closed circuits, with side streets and other routes blocked off by huge invisible barriers and flashing arrows. It kept the racing area defined, but it was hardly as realistic as Midnight Club 2's open cityscapes. In U2, however, you can go down any street, along any alleyway, and through any parking lot. You can pull a donut in the middle of a busy intersection, or tear a rasping powerslide across five lanes of traffic, duck down a sidestreet, jam on the handbrake to flip a 360, and then head back for more. You're FREE!

FREE DRIVIN'

Well, sort of. When you enter the world of Underground 2 the whole city is laid out before you – but you won't be able to get the most from it till you have been on the scene for a while. The Underground is ruled by respect. If you don't have it, you're going nowhere. Winning cash earns respect and stacks of notes to spend at the coolest mod stores, paint shops and car dealerships, and tricking out your car raises your profile further. No visual or performance mod is

RULE THE STREETS – WORLDWIDE!

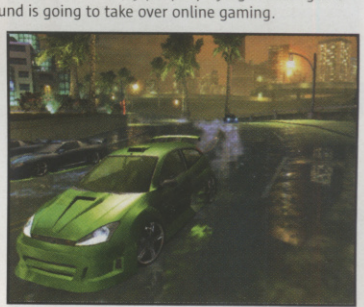
It's not just U2's single player mode that's taking a whole new direction – the online mode has been worked on with the same care and attention:

It's not revolutionary, but U2's online stuff should rock. With so many people playing the last game and the addition of Xbox Live this year, the Underground is going to take over online gaming.

RANK OUTSIDER

The lobby system's much easier to use this time. All suitable games are displayed, and you can filter them down with a simple shortlist system. Finding someone to race who won't hand you your arse in a basket is easy too: the whole online section now runs on a ranking system.

When you start you'll have no reputation, just like the single-player game. As you improve you'll scream through the ranking groups. You can still challenge lower racers, but you won't get many reputation points from the victory. It's a great way to balance the competition and ensure players of all standards get fair competition.



U2's ranking system means you'll be able to roll to the top of the streets at your own pace

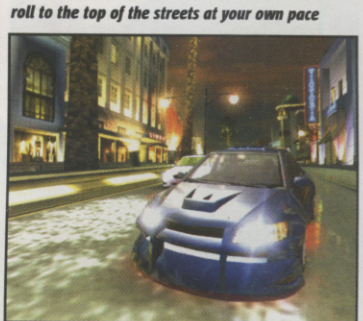
SKILLS TO PAY THE BILLS:

All the race modes in the one-player game are available in multiplayer, and you'll be ranked on your skills in each. You might suck at Circuit racing, but you could still be king of Drag.

You can even go into the city with three other racers and hook up an intense Outrun race – we've seen these little babies go on for half-an-hour, with the lead constantly changing!

SINK THE PINK

The bummer? Well, you can't race for pink slips like you can in Juiced and Street Racing Syndicate. To soften the blow, EA is stacking in online-exclusive unlockables and upgrades so you can show off your multiplayer rep.



To up your online reputation you'll have to defeat opponents rated higher than yourself

ONLY MAD CHICKS RIDE IN MY WHIP

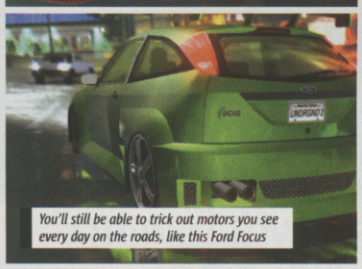
Cars. At the end of the day, that's what it's all about. U2 ups last year's motor count to 30 and introduces some totally new models as well as whole new classes of whip.

Expect all your favourite tuner cars like the Ford Focus, the Mitsu Lancer Evo, the Nissan Skyline, and a few smokin' new rice rockets like the Nissan 350Z and the Mazda RX-8. Even more exciting is the new SUV (Sports Utility Vehicle) class. Last month we dropped the insider knowledge about the Cadillac Escalade we'd seen high-rolling the streets of Bayview in a U2 trailer. This month we've come across some more – unofficial – information about another of U2's new SUV superstars. In an interview with ridiculously fit model Brooke Burke (she's the hot piece on our front cover) she said she couldn't wait to drive a Hummer in the game.

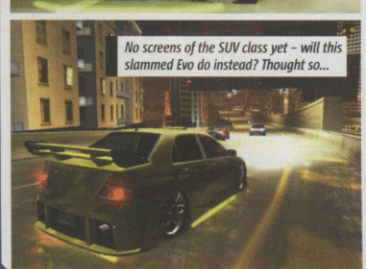
These massive ex-army monsters are well-loved in the hip-hop and DUB scenes, and they're perfect for pimping out with all kinds of trick bits.

And don't worry – 'Slades and Hummers might not be the fastest motors off the blocks, but in U2 you'll be able to tune them to compete with any other car in the game while retaining their looks and handling characteristics. A Hummer skinning a Skyline in a Drag race? Sweet Jesus!

The Mazda RX-8 is one of the hottest new joints in the modding scene – and it's right here

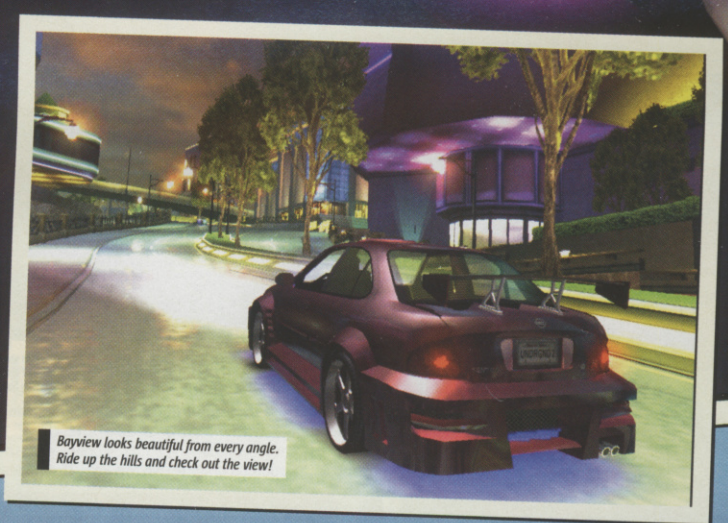

You'll still be able to trick out motors you see every day on the roads, like this Ford Focus

The Nissan 350Z packs 208 horses under its shell – a shell perfect for fat bodykits, by the way


No screens of the SUV class yet – will this slammed Evo do instead? Thought so...

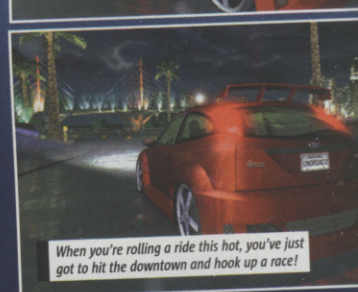
Team blazing neon with the deep new paint effects for some truly dazzling effects

"Sharp turns and suicidal sli
busy traffic are the tactics
get that chump of yo


Bayview looks beautiful from every angle. Ride up the hills and check out the view!

Check out this phat Ford Focus: we've stacked it with a wide bodykit, some huge rims...

...a pair of sweet big bore exhaust tips and a spoiler that'll keep it stuck to the tarmac!

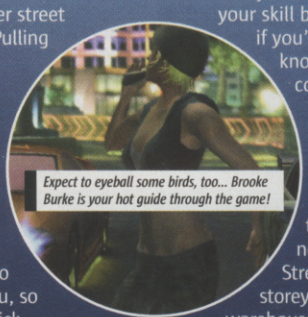

When you're rolling a ride this hot, you've just got to hit the downtown and hook up a race!

» artificially locked in U2 like they were in the first game. If you can find it, and you've got the greens, you can buy it.

You'll be doing loads of driving to raise your rep and track down the hottest spots, so it's lucky that Underground's handling characteristics have stayed familiar. We just wish it was easier to flick your back end out – it can be a real battle to stuff your motor around a hairpin or jam it down a tight sidestreet. Still, EA has promised to soften up the suspension and with new performance customisation options on offer we should be able to tweak our own handling to suit.

HIT THE HOT SPOTS

As you roll you'll see other street racers out on the town. Pulling up next to a fellow tuner will initiate an Outrun race, one of U2's new game modes. The idea here is to get ahead of your opponent then shake him like a Polaroid picture until he's 300 metres behind you. Course, he's trying to pull the same trick on you, so you snooze, you lose. Quick reactions and sound street knowledge come in handy 'cos sharp turns and suicidal slides through busy traffic are the tactics to get that chump off your bumper.


Expect to eyeball some birds, too... Brooke Burke is your hot guide through the game!

The most well-known underground race meets show up on your map, but to gain access to the hottest – and most lucrative – races you'll have to get connected. All of Underground 1's race modes feature in U2, so you'll be able to bust out your Circuit, Drift, Drag and Sprint skills, but the new free-roaming city adds an extra racing dimension. Sprint races will depend as much on your knowledge of the streets as your skill behind the wheel, and even if you're trailing in a Circuit race knowing the hottest shortcuts could flip the script.

MODE LOAD

That's not all though. Four new game modes fill out the roster. We've already told you about Outrun. The next is Street X (pronounced Street Cross). Set in multi-storey car parks and deserted warehouses, you'll line up wheel-to-wheel with four other motors. Laps are short, turns are tight, and the competition is intense. Contact with other cars is guaranteed – watch for fools trying to fishtail you, and make sure you don't get sucked into the pack or your chances will disintegrate like your battered bodykit.

If it starts to rain mid-race, you'll have to take it easy on the slick road surface. Dynamic weather could totally change the course of a race!

Handling remains as tight as in the first game, but we wish we could pull off powerslides a bit easier

TRICK IT UP, ROLL IT OUT

You want car SERIOUS customisation? You got it! U2's final total of licensed afterparts is DOUBLE the number in the first game!

The idea is to give you the opportunity to pimp your motor exactly how you want. Apart from looking cool as funk, the more you spend on your motor the more money you'll win, and the more respect you'll gather. In addition to all the extra spoilers, wide bodykits, headlight hoods and carbon bonnets from licensed suppliers, now you can hook up loads of fresh mods. Here's a selection:

CUSTOMISED DOORS

Give your wings some bling with upwards-opening scissor doors and backwards-opening 'suicide' doors.

HYDRAULIC SUSPENSION

Get your motor's body-poppin' with hip-hop style hydraulics that dip low and bounce high.

ROOF SCOOPS

Flesh out your aerodynamics – and look even cooler – with a plunging air intake on your roof.

SPLIT HOODS

Don't pop your bonnet – slide it open by remote control from the middle or from corner to corner!

NEON

Fit rainbow coloured or colour-cycle neon, or use neon fixtures to highlight your hottest mods.

ICE

No street racer is complete without a phat audio install, and U2 will let you stack as many subs, amps and tweeters as you want!

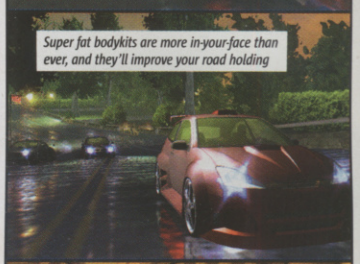
SPINNERS AND FAT RIMS

All the newest rims- up to 20" and possibly bigger will be included and bling spinners will show up

CAR SPECIALITIES

These hook-ups, exclusive to each car, will let you give your favourite motor a unique look.

More decals, more vinyls, more paint options, more visual mods... U2 lets you totally style your ride



Super fat bodykits are more in-your-face than ever, and they'll improve your road holding

The list of new afterparts manufacturers runs into about 30 of the hottest names in tuner culture

BOYZ UNDER THE HOOD

EA told us that one of the biggest criticisms real boy racers had of the first Underground was the lack of performance tuning.

You could fit performance enhancing mods, but there was no way to actually tweak the settings. In U2 you can tune and tinker till you're choking on sump oil.

CHECK THE PACKAGE

When you purchase a tuning mod you can buy the full kit or the individual parts. Both improve performance but the individual parts let you adjust settings and tailor your motor exactly how you want it.

NAME THAT TUNE

If the parts you've bought are high quality you'll be able to tune them better and more accurately than cheap, nasty components. You'll have to balance your mods and be careful not to build an uncontrollable ride.

The second new game mode is Organic Drifting. This is actually how drifting was born on Japan's mountainous roads – rather than getting sideways around empty tracks, the idea here is to get up into the steep streets of the suburbs, bomb it down, and carve some ridiculous slides into the hillside tarmac.

The negative incline means it's easier to kick your back end out but harder to stop your bumper assaulting a wall as you slither round a corner. And just wait until you squeal around a blind bend at 80mph and come face to face with a delivery truck...

The last new game mode? It's still under wraps, but EA has whispered to us that certain new customisations like audio build outs and bouncy hydraulic suspension will open up new possibilities for earning money. Does this mean that the new mode will be some kind of show-off rhythm action game where you slam your suspension and bounce along to the beats from your stereo?

Don't worry if you just want to rip it – you can buy a pre-install kit. All the performance, none of the hassle

DYNO CRISIS

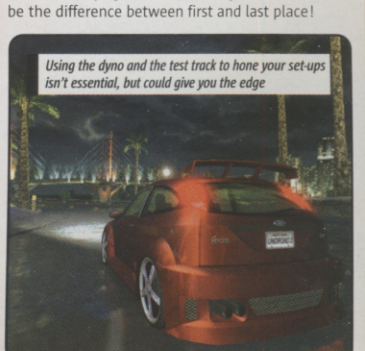
To get an idea of how your motor's running, stick it on the dyno (a rolling road that calculates your car's performance) and study the results.

TRACK 'EM UP

But for real on-the-fly tuning take your motor onto the test track. Get a feel for your performance, pause the game, make some adjustments, then dive right back in!

SAVE YOUR SET-UPS

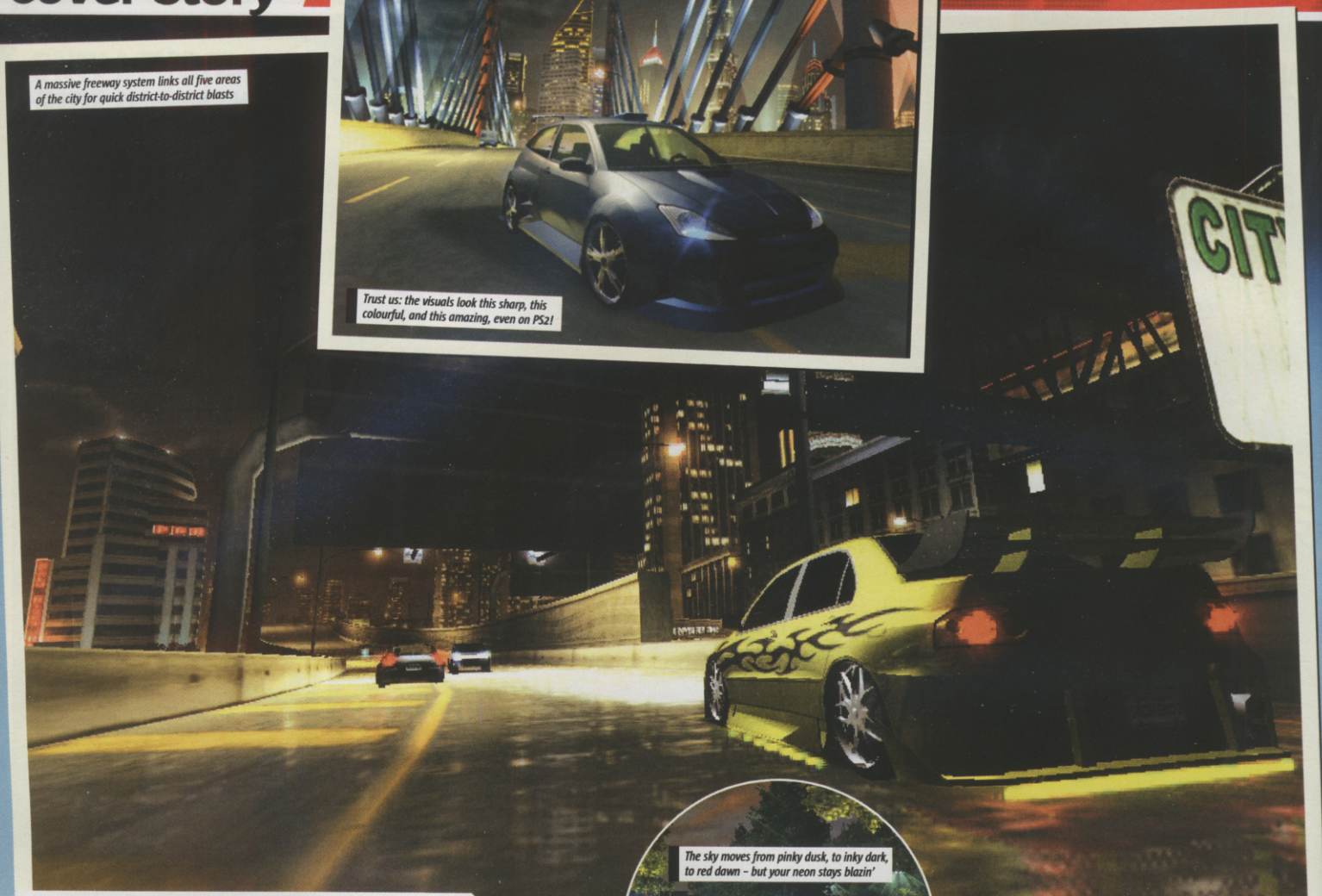
The more you tinker, the more you'll be rewarded with increased performance. Save set-ups for each different game mode then apply them to the cars in your garage for the racing edge – this is going to rock in multiplayer mode, where your tweaks could be the difference between first and last place!



Using the dyno and the test track to hone your set-ups isn't essential, but could give you the edge

Trust us: the visuals look this sharp, this colourful, and this amazing, even on PS2!

A massive freeway system links all five areas of the city for quick district-to-district blasts



The sky moves from pinky dusk, to inky dark, to red dawn – but your neon stays blazin'

STREET HEAT

Customisation-stuffed street racers are all over our consoles now like fibreglass on a Ferrari, so how does the competition line up against the as-yet untouched leader of the pack, NFS Underground?

STREET RACING SYNDICATE

Namco's bird-obsessed boy racer (and show us one that isn't) takes a bit more of an arcadey approach to the driving, but there's loads of stunts to pull off, cops to shake, and pinks to win online. Pink slips that is. Not lady parts.

SRS

JUICED

Jammed with hot motors, a brilliant online mode, and favouring a more technical driving style, we're big fans of Acclaim's slidey racer. Never really got the atmosphere right, though. Girly menus and body-popping dancers? No ta.

JUICED

MIDNIGHT CLUB 3

Blaow! All up in your grill like George Foreman, Rockstar's MC3 has hooked up an association with ultra-cool US car mag DUB. We're loving the cash-money styling and the intense urban racing is faster than anything we've seen.

MC3

FORZA MOTORSPORT

Not strictly a street racer, but such is the depth of customisation on offer that Microsoft's driving epic will appeal to the tuner culture as much as old men with slippers watching Jensen Button come seventh. Again.

FORZA

GARAGE BEATS

Whatever the final modes are, there'll be over 200 individual events throughout U2. Here's the great thing, though: you won't have to race in them all to complete the game. Love Drag races but hate Drifting? Mould your ride into a straightaway rocket and rule the quarter mile! You'll have to compete in at least a couple of every type of race at some point, but the idea is to let you play the game exactly how you want. You'll be rewarded for your dedication too – skill-specific unlockables and treats will be included for each race mode.

That means your racing preferences will seriously affect your choice of car and how you tune it, so it's lucky that you're not limited to just one motor any more – you can stack five bad boys in a garage and break them out whenever you need an extra lick of speed or an extra stick of grip! The garage totally changes how you spend your cash. Do you trade-in your motor or run it ragged while you save for another?

Mods and customisations won't just flow over to a new car, either: if you bought a spoiler for your Skyline, it's staying bolted to that baby. Mods are much more model-exclusive now, and there's even a new class of hook-ups called Car Specialities. These trick bits give each individual motor their own exclusive attitude and style that can't be transferred between models, so you could get a unique bodykit for your Skyline, some fatboy rims for your SUV, or a ton of chrome fittings for your Focus.

OWN THE UNDERGROUND

Having a deep garage roster is important, because things in Bayview can change in the blink of a headlight. U2 is introducing a totally dynamic weather system that can dump rain onto any section of the city at any moment.

You'll see the tarmac shimmer as the water builds, and you'll feel your handling melt as your tyres aquaplane on the greasy surface. It looks awesome, but it'll also add a nice layer of tactics. If the skies open, should you take your high-powered rear-wheel drive Nissan 350Z back to the garage and swap it up for a less tuned but more grippy 4x4 Mitsu Evo?

After all, you wouldn't want to become a victim to U2's new damage system. Yup, every scrape is going to show up on your pride and joy, and although it won't affect your performance, the sight of a battered Mazda RX-8 dragging a sparking spoiler along the asphalt is enough to ruin any car fan's race.

When we say 'any car fan' we really mean it. Thrashing U2 confirms one thing – EA has stuffed in so much horsepower that no racing game nut will be able to resist it. They've gone for the hardcore – the tuner magazines, the guys tinkering under their hoods every day and out on the streets every night – but they haven't forgotten that NFSU2 needs to retain the ultra-fast gameplay and tarmac-abrasive attitude that made the first game such a huge success. Forget half-arsed mods mail-ordered from the back of Max Power. U2 isn't a tune-up, it's street racing evolved. ✷

CVG OPINION

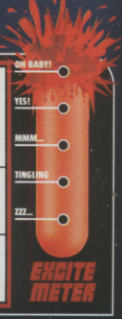
Almost unbelievably better than U1, U2 is hitting us up with more of EVERYTHING. You'd be brave to bet your pink slip against it ruling the streets come Christmas.

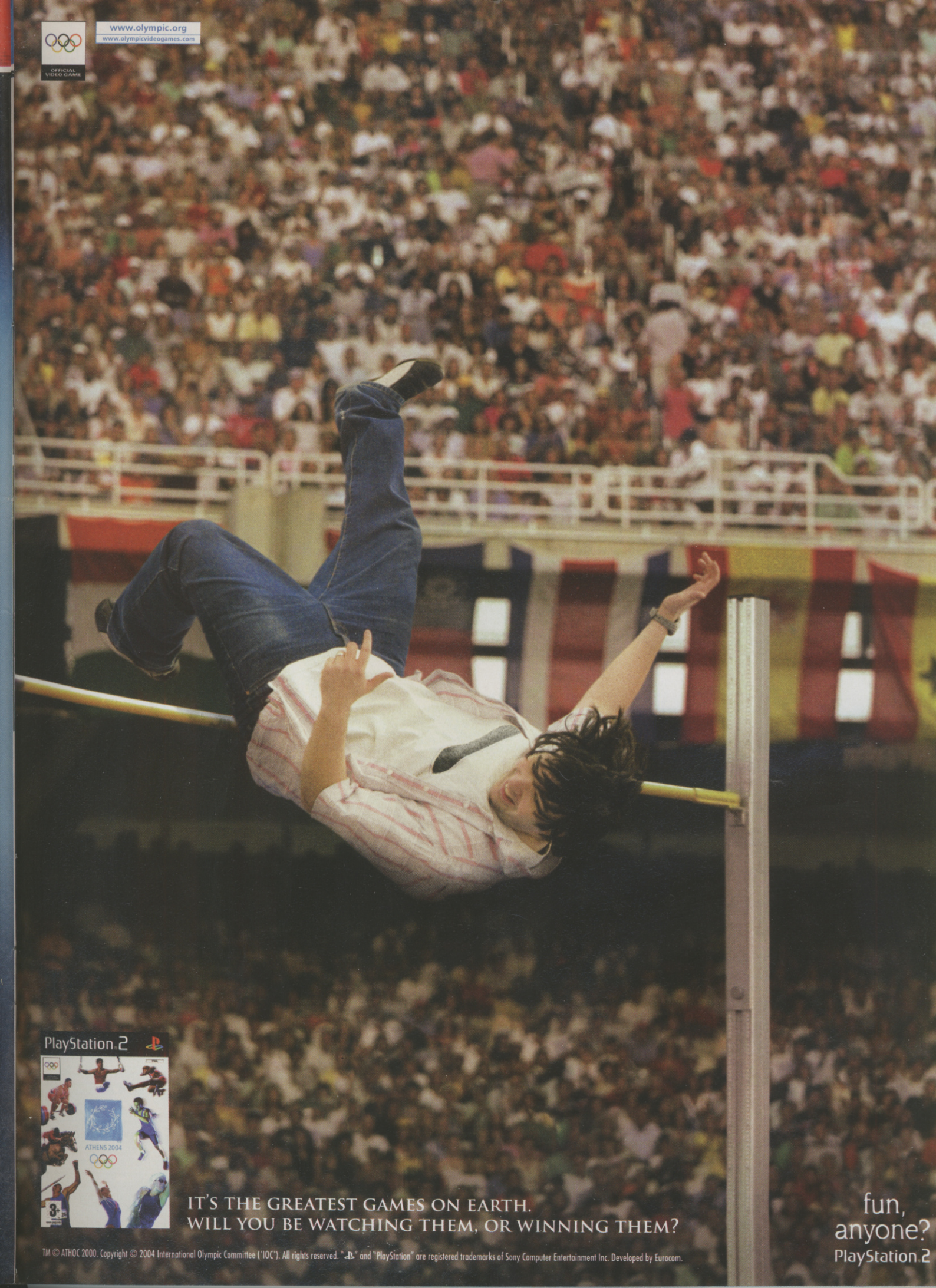
WE LOVE

- The huge line-up of visual mods
- The new performance tweaking
- The huge free-roaming cityscape

WE HATE

- Handling feels a little stiff...
- So we can't powerslide very well
- A little speed boost would be good

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PRINCE OF PERSIA 2

* PUBLISHER
UBISOFT
* DEVELOPER
UBISOFT
* OUT:
NOVEMBER

IN A NUTSHELL

We're shocked to see a sequel so soon, but don't worry, this isn't a rushed cash-in. Instead, the combat element has been hugely reworked and the use of time to solve puzzles plus help in combat is more elaborate.

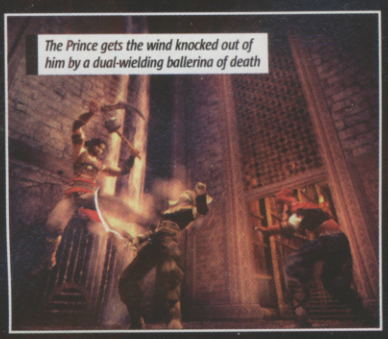
AVAILABLE ON

PS2

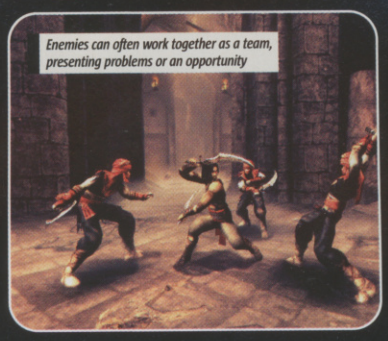
ALSO ON

XBOX, PC

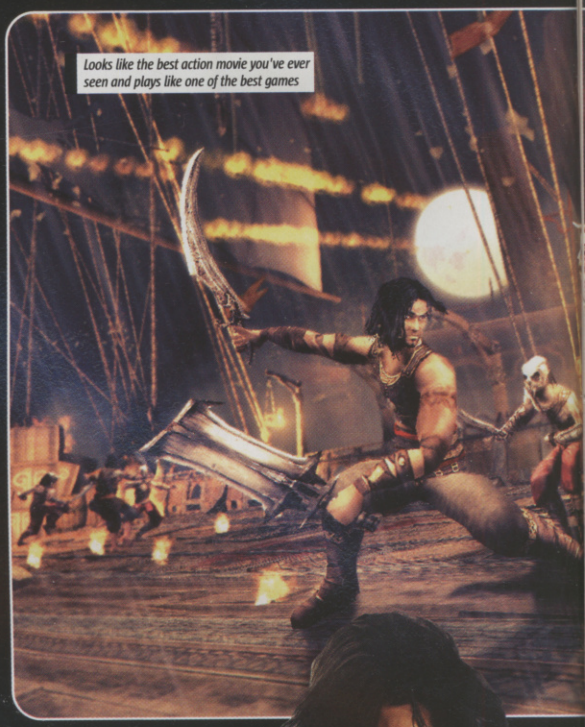
WWW.PRINCEOFPERSIAGAME.COM



The Prince gets the wind knocked out of him by a dual-wielding ballerina of death



Enemies can often work together as a team, presenting problems or an opportunity



Looks like the best action movie you've ever seen and plays like one of the best games

Play with fire, and you could get burned. Play with time, and a supernatural fiend called a Dahaka comes after you – like The Punisher and Resi's Nemesis rolled into one! Who do we know that's been messing with time recently? Oops, The Prince of Persia!.

His heart searching for a way to defeat the evil Vizier, our hero didn't think ahead to the consequences when offered the Sands Of Time to aid him. Sadly, his use of the SOT throughout his last adventure caused a rift in time, and punishment for such a thing is, apparently, death.

Indeed, The Prince barely has time to celebrate his earlier heroics before he's neck-deep in more trouble – running for his life from one of the terrible Dahaka (Persian for 'fate') monsters, who are tasked with protecting the timeline.

ONCE UPON THE SANDS OF TIME...

Even worse, once the beast is on your back it's clingier than Big Brother bunny boiler Michelle, returning every night to make stew from The Prince's guts. In desperation he visits a mystical old man, only to discover the terrible truth: that The Prince must die, no matter what.

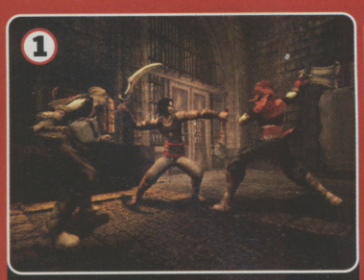
So The Prince embarks on a foolhardy quest to seek the Empress of Time and try to prevent the Sands of Time from being created in the first place. The old mystic describes it as impossible, but, hey, this is Ubisoft and given how fast it turns around sequels, clearly it doesn't know the meaning of impossible.

Last year's Prince of Persia was one of the highlights of 2003. But when Ubisoft got to dealing with the sequel it took the hard line with almost every aspect of what many of us thought was already spot on. It reckoned the fighting system was boring and repetitive, was ashamed there weren't any bosses to fight, and felt the replay value was poor.

I'LL TAKE THIS AND YOU...TAKE THAT!

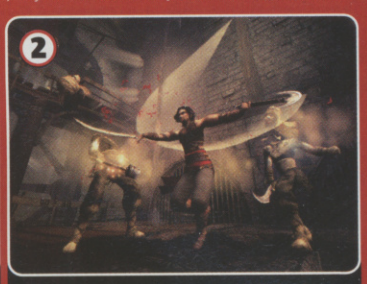
Our prince now has a choice of secondary weapons to elaborate on his sabre repertoire.

Last time around the Dagger of Time provided finishing moves, but now a wider variety of disposable weapons offer an expanded range of exotic strikes instead. Your upgradable sabre is your main weapon but the secondaries wear out with use, so you must constantly search for replacements.



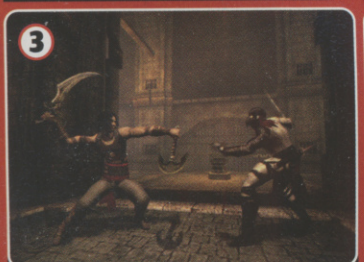
1

Hmm... choices, choices... I'll waste this Disciple, then steal the other guy's axe



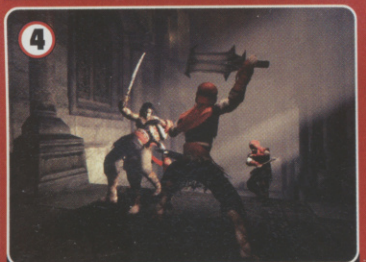
2

The most spectacular moves are all thanks to the new range of secondary weapons



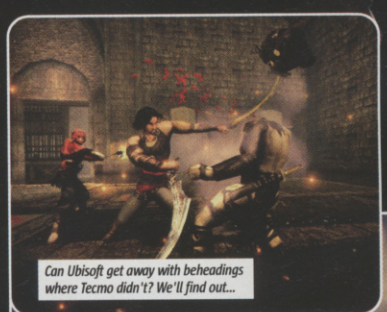
3

The axe, or the sword. The axe... or the sword... your choice, gimp boy, and hurry!

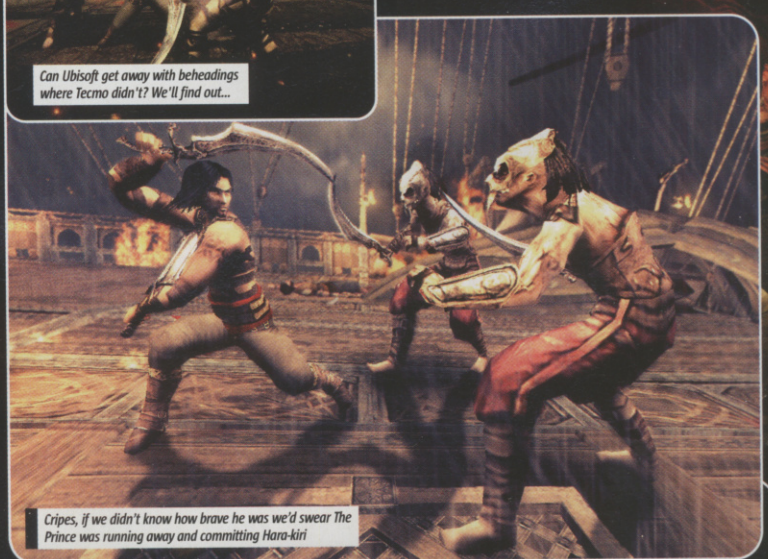


4

To steal a weapon you first need to sneak up from behind and wrestle it from them



Can Ubisoft get away with beheadings where Tecmo didn't? We'll find out...



Cripes, if we didn't know how brave he was we'd swear The Prince was running away and committing Hara-kiri

"ANYONE CAUGHT IN A STRANGLEHOLD CAN BE SLICED, THROWN OR KICKED AWAY. IT'S AMAZING"

At the lapdancing club, The Prince's novelty act didn't go down well with punters

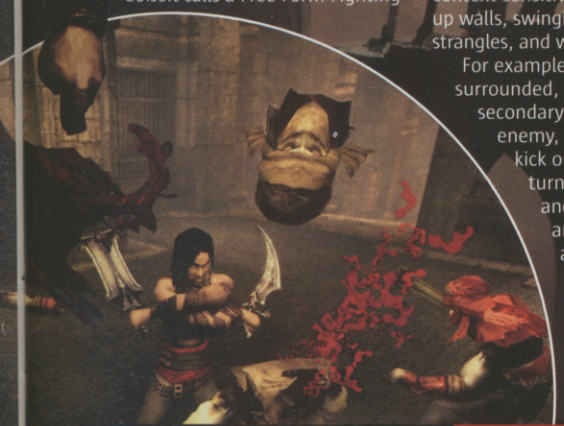
DIG DEEP

To find a solution, the POP team identified one main quality it felt summed up their problems overall: lack of depth. And so POP2 is all about depth, whether you're talking about the range of puzzles, the physical size of the game, and especially when it comes to the fighting.

Combat in POP2 has been massively reworked to become the central, most enjoyable aspect of the game. Instead of mashing one attack button to fend off dumb re-spawning enemies, The Prince's moves are directed by what Ubisoft calls a Free-Form Fighting system. Enemies no longer re-spawn, but require individual strategies to overcome. The combination of new fighting system and more intelligent enemies gives POP2 new zest, and the unrelenting battle scenes can leave you breathless. Ubisoft is aiming to present big-impact, acrobatic and 'exotic' gameplay through all this, and we're glad to say it works.

Key to the free-form system is the Opportunity Window – a split-second moment during which you can link one move into another. A combo, basically, but in the context of POP2 it means more than just another hit. In addition to his basic strike, The Prince's combat tools include context sensitive special attacks (running up walls, swinging around pillars), kicks, strangles, and weapon throwing.

For example, if The Prince is surrounded, he can throw out his secondary weapon to stun one enemy, then immediately kick out at another, then turn to smack yet another in the mush, and from there put another in a strangle hold to steal its weapon. Anyone caught in a stranglehold can be sliced, thrown or kicked away into the fray. It's amazing.



Jaw-dropping scenes like this are waiting for us in POP2. Hate waiting! Hate waiting!

"MY OTHER WEAPON IS A..."

In POP1 The Prince was restricted to the Dagger of Time to provide back up during attacks. In POP2, his options have significantly opened up to include additional swords, axes, and heavy objects for the purpose of throwing. Just as in POP1, The Prince will find increasingly more powerful sabres to act as his primary weapon, but it's the secondary weapons that are most spectacular.

Combine two swords, and heads start to roll through Hollywood-style decapitations – the swords can be thrown out to spike enemies too. Axes are traditionally slower and more damaging but break easily. In fact, all secondary weapons break over time, and the need for replacements means you won't settle into a familiar routine at any stage, keeping the gameplay fresh.

POP'S GOTTA NEW BAG

The thrill of POP2 is focused on combat skills. Our Prince's fighting techniques have been developed to include lopping off heads and cleaving zombie foes in two.

Enemies can also be grabbed from behind and strangled to steal their weapons, then thrown into a crowd to knock them back or kicked just because it feels good. Nice!

Urgh... walls are spinning, need to lie down. Ack! That's my body down there!

The Prince swings both ways and makes with the scissor action to lop off heads

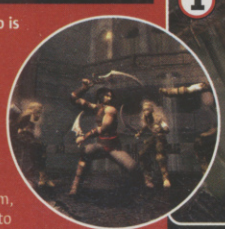
Even basic attacks look flashier – enemies now stagger with the force of blows

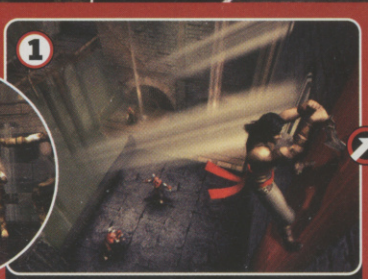
Who needs blades to show you're the boss when you've got Feet Of Doom!

THIS MEANS CURTAINS

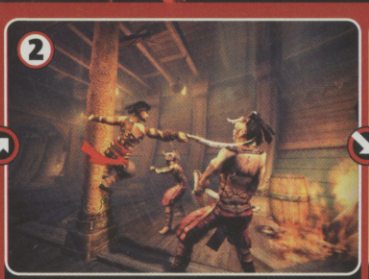
Every scene the prince walks into is loaded with acrobatic potential that'll send monkey blood coarsing through your veins.

The kind of thing you're used to seeing action heroes perform in dramatic cutscenes, Ubisoft wanted to incorporate into the game itself. Though moves are usually easy to perform, you need to find the best places to put into action the Prince's trademark moves. Take a look at some of the prince's cool new actions.

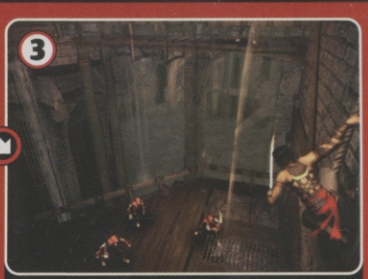




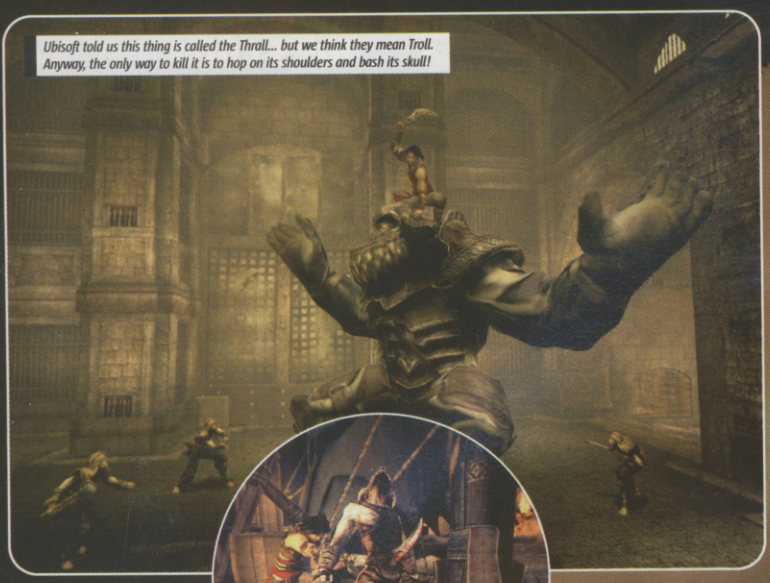
A dagger provides a cool route from a high-up place, using the curtain to slow the fall



Hop onto a pillar to swing around and hack at the necks of passers by. Cool or what?

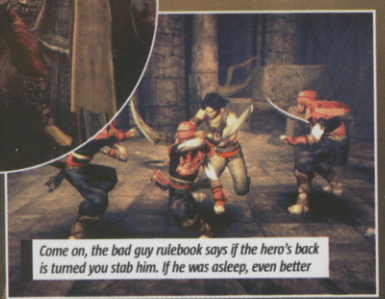


Cling onto a rope, biding your time until the enemies below are positioned just right



Ubisoft told us this thing is called the Thrall... but we think they mean Troll. Anyway, the only way to kill it is to hop on its shoulders and bash its skull!

Masked pirates look scary enough, but The Prince's bravado stops at nothing. Swish!

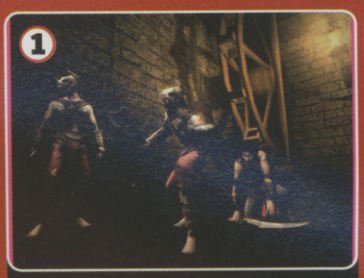


Come on, the bad guy rulebook says if the hero's back is turned you stab him. If he was asleep, even better

MY PLAYGROUND YOUR PAIN

The designers of POP2 wanted The Prince to be as dextrous as the greatest action heroes of all time, along the lines of Chow Yun Fat in Crouching Tiger.

The pace of the action can be varied if you use the full potential of locations to lure enemies into The Prince's hands. And no, we're not just talking about looking for suitably sneaky ways to creep up behind pantalooned goons...



Though it's not all flying about and making a show of it, so sometimes stealth is called for

But by gaining this vantage point our energetic hero can choose a number of ways to deal pain

Create space in this open area to spear enemies from behind. This looks very painful

Some rooms have pressure-pads to activate traps. Most enemies don't see this coming

REMEMBER THE TIME

Since he's already in trouble for messing up time, The Prince may as well have fun while it lasts. He's mastered fresh ways to manipulate it and, in keeping with POP2's theme, the new uses are combat-linked.

As before, time control is powered by Sand Slots. Rewinding time to a point before a mistake was made costs very little, whereas all-new Time Charge attacks take up as many as three slots. Time Charge attacks look superb, including Timewave that creates a sickening effect to disorientate enemies, and Shockwave that sends out a sonic boom to damage all enemies within range.

Slowdown is more effective than before, since The Prince is unaffected by it. Therefore allowing him to solve certain puzzles through buying time to dash from A to B, or give him the upper hand in a skirmish.

Perhaps the most significant update of time control, though, is time travel. In some areas there are portals to the same place, only centuries in the past. By using these, The Prince can change his present day situation for the better in an all-encompassing way.

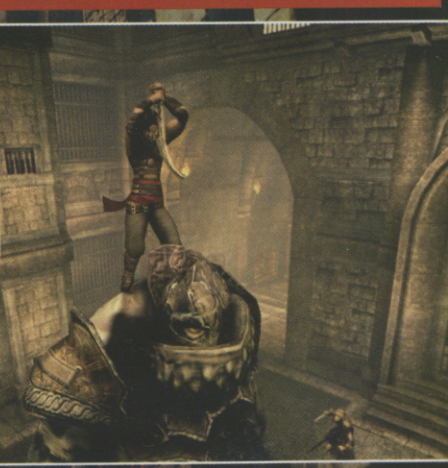
We're fully expecting some of these costumes to turn up in Peter Jackson's new King Kong movie

"Think about all the money I'll save you on hats"

TIME ON HIS SIDE

The complex fighting system and enhanced time control element are balanced against the varied enemy types in POP2. There are at least 12 distinct classes of enemy, each requiring unique tactics to overcome. An Avatar, for example, can only be damaged from behind. Disciples try to synchronise their attacks, surrounding The Prince. Some enemies explode as they die, and this can be used tactically to inflict wounds on others, or even blast holes in walls to open an escape route.

It all adds up to a Hollywood-style epic experience, but the crowning glory are the boss battles that are reminiscent of the old Ray Harryhausen movies... only much better looking of course! The Prince's first encounter with Shahdee (who's the spit of Ivy from Soulcalibur) is a swashbuckling duel onboard a sinking pirate ship. A fight with a gigantic troll requires The Prince to hop onto its broad shoulders, and hammer at its skull with the handle of his sabre.



There don't seem to be a lot of weakspots on him, so there seems as good a place to try as anywhere

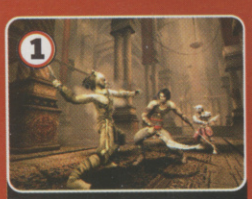
Our palms are sweating in anticipation of POP2, and you can bet we ain't seen the half of it. With so much new content and a darker edge, it promises to be bigger than Mr Troll's todger after Mrs Troll buffed his helmet with dwarf wax. ✷

MOST PRINCELY ON XBOX

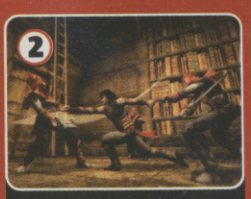
If you're playing POP2 on Xbox, you've reason to feel warm and smug.

The Xbox version has enhanced visuals, including Normal Mapping (the graphical magic that made Riddick look so slick) to give more realistic textures, and dynamic shadows that give more solidity to characters.

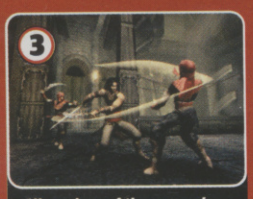
On top of this, Xbox Live will give you two new play modes to download – Time Attack and Survival. Microsoft's ugly suitcase of a console just keeps on getting better, and Live is so far ahead of PS2 online it's scary.



Dynamic shadows on Xbox respond accurately to the changing light sources



Normal mapping allows the detail in this library to reflect the light realistically

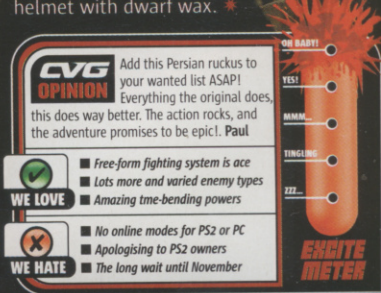


All versions of the game play the same, but on Xbox the atmosphere is most intense

CVG OPINION Add this Persian ruckus to your wanted list ASAP! Everything the original does, this does way better. The action rocks, and the adventure promises to be epic!. **Paul**

WE LOVE
- *Free-form fighting system is ace*
- *Lots more and varied enemy types*
- *Amazing tme-bending powers*

WE HATE
- *No online modes for PS2 or PC*
- *Apologising to PS2 owners*
- *The long wait until November*



Digital Jesters

Monte Cristo
www.montecristogames.com

"...Sim City, your time is up..."
PCACTION

PC CD

12+
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MEDIEVAL LORDS

Build, Defend, Expand

Medieval Lords: Build, Defend, Expand challenges aspiring city governors to build and manage thriving cities, protect against invasions from neighbouring kingdoms, and expand into new territories - all in the city building genre's first 3D environment that lets the player zoom right into the action and build anywhere on the map.

Medieval Lords brings city builders inside the walls of richly-detailed cities during the middle ages. Through the course of ten scenarios, players must manage finances, population, and food resources to evolve towns into thriving kingdoms. Build docks for fishing local waters, harvest fields to grow food and raise livestock, keep citizens healthy and entertained, and recruit soldiers and cavalry for a well-defended city.

October 2004

www.medievallords.com

grand theft auto San Andreas

- PUBLISHER ROCKSTAR
- DEVELOPER ROCKSTAR NORTH
- OUT: OCTOBER 22

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

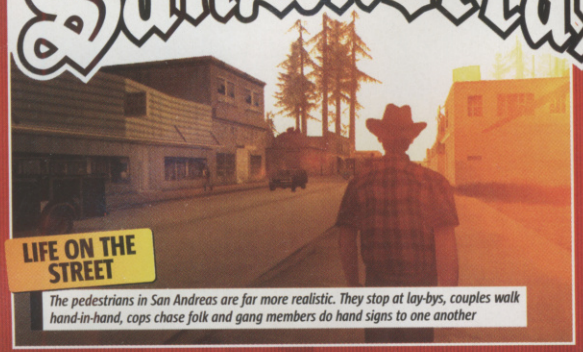
Rockstar unleashes the wildest side of its imagination to create a new GTA world packed with more freedom and fun than any other game on the planet. San Andreas dwarfs Vice City five times over. It's gonna be historic.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

WWW.GTASANANDREAS.COM

UPDATE



LIFE ON THE STREET

The pedestrians in San Andreas are far more realistic. They stop at lay-bys, couples walk hand-in-hand, cops chase folk and gang members do hand signs to one another

CHANGE YOUR PANTS

You can customise your clothing, alternating different trousers and tops for the flyest look

WANTED ALL OVER SAN ANDREAS

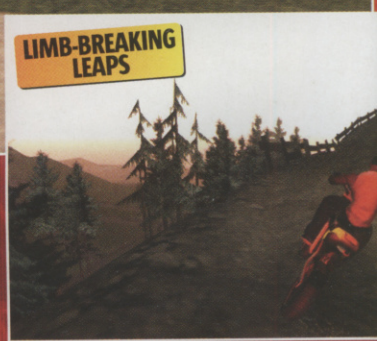
The countryside on the outskirts of Los Santos features loads of little towns, settlements, farms, shacks in the woods and landmarks

Highway patrol, police helicopters and SWAT teams will chase you from small country towns, cross-country and back into the city

BEYOND THE CITY LIMITS

Not just BMXs then. CJ pedals through a small town outside Los Santos on his mountain bike. It's got mad suspension. Perfect for screaming down Mt Chilliad

MOUNTAIN BIKES



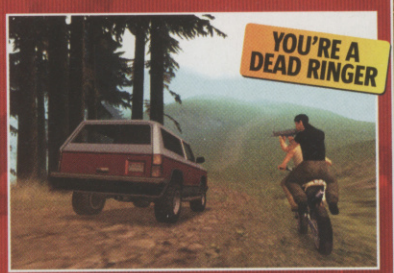
LIMB-BREAKING LEAPS

Mt Chilliad is going to provide some insane Stunt Bonus opportunities to die for. 2,000ft jumps are on the cards... but whether you'll be able to land them alive is still unknown

Last month CVG slapped you with 50 safe San Andreas facts. But here's the coolest fact: all these details and everything you're about to read covers way less than five percent of what anyone knows about the finished game. If you're not excited, get a mate to check you've still got a pulse.

This really hit home when Rockstar dropped the news on us that San Andreas is expected to spit out 300 hours of gameplay. This game ain't just big, it's fookin' gargantuan in every sense.

It starts to sink in when you're sat on your Sanchez a quarter of the way up Mount Chilliad (a half-mile-tall mountain), clouds just above your head, and looking out over miles of wickedly detailed rambling countryside thinking, 'Is that a monster truck I can see way off in the distance down there on that farm?' And it is.



YOU'RE A DEAD RINGER

A gang of rednecks chase you on scramblers. If they do serious damage to the doors they'll spot that you're acting as a decoy for a buddy of yours = mission failed

FOUR BY PHWOAR

Bouncing around through forests, over huge jumps, ravines and rivers in the monster truck is nuts. It's got four-wheel drive, so it powers up the steepest slopes. Plus, if you hold down the handbrake button this makes the rear wheels angle inwards, giving you a wickedly tight turning circle. After Vice City it was tough to imagine what sorts of extra vehicles could up the fun, but Rockstar's pulled out all the stops.

Remember this is GTA, so you can jack anything and take it anywhere. You want to drive a combine harvester cross-country and take it through the mean streets of Los Santos, cutting down a rival gang with it's whirling blades? Do it.

When CJ jacks a ride he punches them in the face before tossing them to the curb

NEW CAR-JACKING ANIMATIONS

Now you can also drive fully articulated lorries, with detachable payloads that jack-knife across the road realistically if you're driving isn't spot on. However, the more time you spend at the wheel the better CJ's skills become.

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

The natural vegetation looks unbelievable, but it's easy to get lost as it's so huge

SNAP HAPPY ACTION

The camera is back from Grand Theft Auto: Vice City, and there'll be even more missions where you have to take well composed photographs. Here you have to kill a snitch and snap his corpse

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

This is a new feature in the GTA series – ALL of CJ's talents gradually improve. If you spend heaps of time driving cars and trucks your handling skills will slowly develop, preventing the back wheels from sliding out as much, giving you more control. The same happens with bikes. You can focus on getting better at using one type of transport or upping your skills with every sort of vehicle, including planes and that old Vice City fave, helicopters.

CJ can even become more masterful with weapons. If you spend ages using a gun your bullets will group closer together and you'll be able to reload faster. In theory your CJ and your mate's CJ should have completely different strengths and weaknesses. There's so much depth, but as you're not forced to level-up your main character it should feel extremely natural.

Drive by next month, when we'll be bringing you masses of new facts, which should mean that only a mere 94 percent of San Andreas should still be under wraps. ✷

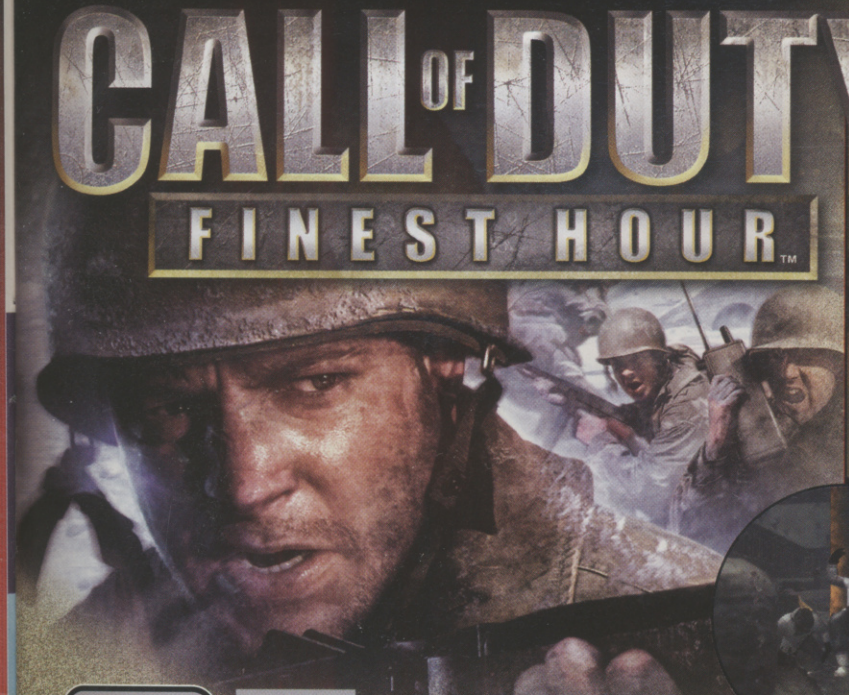
CVG OPINION If you thought the country stuff wouldn't work, here's cowpat in your eye. The urban and rural action fuses seamlessly. We can't believe how amazing this will be. **Mike**

WE LOVE
- Mashing monster trucks up half-mile-high mountains
- Improving your various abilities

WE HATE
- The pain in our brains from trying to figure out just exactly how brilliant San Andreas promises to be

EXCITE METER

CALL OF DUTY: FINEST HOUR™



Are we sure we want to go in there mate? Looking pretty dangerous to me

* PUBLISHER ACTIVISION
* DEVELOPER SPARK UNLIMITED
* OUT: WINTER

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

All new, console-dedicated extension to Activision's answer to EA's MoH series, it's loosely based on famous WWII conflicts. Team-based online multiplayer looks promising, but details on this are still secret.

AVAILABLE ON

XBOX

ALSO ON

PS2, GAMECUBE

WWW.CALLOFDUTY.COM

Understanding the difference between your typical console and PC players has been key to making Finest Hour the best it can be.

Cleverly, we think, Spark Unlimited has gone all out to deliver a more heavily cinematic-oriented experience for Xbox, PS2 and GameCube, while still hanging on to the horrific nature of the conflicts involved. Although some of the battlefields will be in common with the PC versions of CoD, the emphasis is more theatrical. It's less about grim death, and more about surviving and getting out with your buddies intact.

THROUGH THEIR EYES

Even on console the first-person sector is already looking overcrowded, and the competition ain't too shabby. So the focus for Finest Hour is to see the war through the eyes of heroes in the most dramatic conflicts of WWII, featuring the likes of a British commando, an American GI and a Russian sniper, with about half the levels involving kicking ass in vehicles like tanks and jeeps. Given all this, we not only have a great deal of gameplay variation to look forward to, but the chance to experience what it felt like to emerge as a hero from the key battles of WWII.

One of the ways Finest Hour has us all appreciate the sacrifices that were made in WWII is to put you in a squad. Within a close-nit team you'll encounter strong personalities, and realise what the war means to them – all kinds of people from different backgrounds just trying to get through it all.

LEGENDS LIVE ON

So far Activision has concentrated on previewing to us a tank battle, based on a famous encounter on a Belgian airfield. The scene erupts in chaos, with you in the role of an African-American tank commander, modelled after the legendary Black Panthers squadron. Even from the safety of his tank, you feel vulnerable as explosions burst all around and infantry run for cover. It has the desired effect – this is terrifying, but totally inspiring.

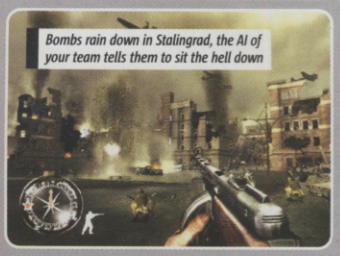
How all this carefully choreographed battle action will translate to a straight-forward online deathmatch remains to be seen. Activision and Spark have yet to reveal the full list of online features, except to say that the squad-based theme will remain central to the experience. Sounds cool to us *

RIGHT IN THE TICK OF IT

Without question, the goal of Finest Hour is to deliver a gut-wrenching theatrical rendition of WWII warfare.

If our hands aren't shaking after being thrown into the trenches, or having piloted a tank with only a small window to peer through as bullets bounce off the armour, the game hasn't done its job. Brace yourself, we're going in!

You and a comrade give suppressing fire to buy your squad time to move in



Bombs rain down in Stalingrad, the AI of your team tells them to sit the hell down

You go right ahead fellers, I'll...err... stay here and make sure you're not followed

View from your tank. Those guys were in the wrongest place at the wrongest time

Fresh flesh for the meat grinder that was Stalingrad, the grimmest struggle of the war

The drama unfolds as your commanding officer lays down his orders for your squad to advance

Your balls are gonna freeze as you squat fearfully in this trench by the Volga watching friends die

Russian troops row their tiny, helpless boat toward Stalingrad – or what's left of it

CVG OPINION

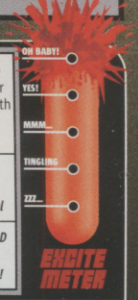
Call in reinforcements – to your bedroom! Finest Hour shakes the foundations with its hard-hitting battle action, and treats its heroes with respect. **Paul**

WE LOVE

- The sense of pre-battle dread
- Chunky WWII weapons
- Battlefields never looked so brutal

WE HATE

- Less strategic and varied as PC CoD
- Need to be convinced of depth
- WWII FPS overload. We surrender!



* PUBLISHER
ACTIVISION
* DEVELOPER
PANDEMIC
* OUT:
JANUARY 2005

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Free-style destruction in near-future warfare. Three main characters use real-world weapons and military vehicles to hunt down fugitives as ruthlessly as possible. So long as the job gets done, and you look good getting there.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

ALSO ON

XBOX

WWW.PANDEMICSTUDIOS.COM

YOU WON'T BE NEEDING THIS

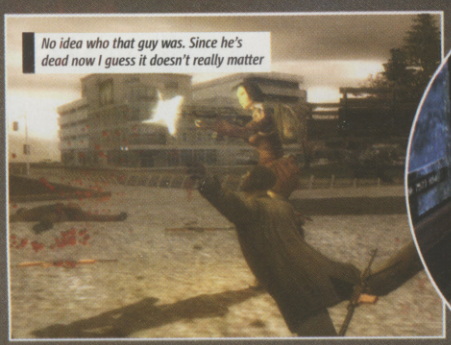
Mercs pays GTA respects in a number of ways, but the biggest comparison to be drawn is with the hijacking of vehicles.

Even so, instead of getting excited about just one helicopter gunship, the range of war machines to commandeer is plain ridiculous. You sure you can fly this thing? You sure you can drive that thing? Who cares, let's just find out!

Do our eyes deceive or is that helicopter dragging that jeep along by its ladder? Insane

Sorry fellers, I got a job to do. You want to surrender? Should have said 'fore I got here

When you're through with a vehicle, stick a bomb in it and wait for the enemy to close in



No idea who that guy was. Since he's dead now I guess it doesn't really matter

A British secret agent pouts her lips while awaiting the next set of orders. Mwah

That flying guy just broke the world high jump record. Shame he's dead

MERCENARIES

Activision sees Mercenaries as GTA meets World War III. Having seen the game in action, we'd say it really is as sick as all that.

Events take place in near-future North Korea, where three soldiers of fortune are assigned to track down high-profile fugitives. The mercs comprise of a wisecracking American ex-soldier, a Swedish bounty hunter, and bitch of a Brit secret agent girl.

Not long until I'll be the one in the heli and you'll be the one running, dude!

They're all under the employ of Executive Operations and are paid to experiment in the most explosive ways possible. If they see it, they can steal it, use it or blow it to buggery.

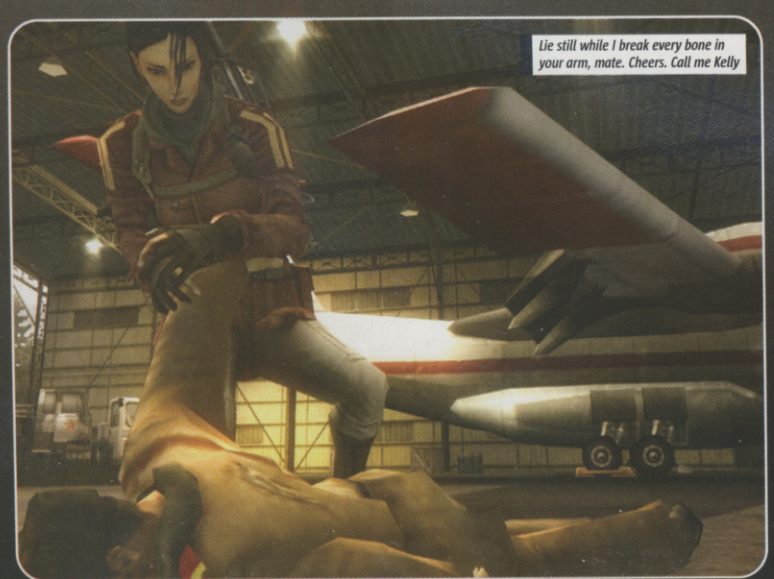
GTA NORTH KOREA... KINDA

The 52 fugitives, codenamed Deck of 52 (after a pack of cards, durr), comprise of Korea's most dangerous ex-officials. The bigger the threat posed by each member, the higher the value of the corresponding card. So a high-ranking scientist could be the King of Spades, for example.

Anyhow, Deck of 52 has threatened a nuke attack, putting the frighteners up the Russian Mafia, the North Korean and Chinese governments and others. Cash to fund Executive Operations' campaigns flows freely from these superpowers, provided Deck of 52's house of cards is toppled in return. Our three mercs must use their individual skills to impress the various factions, sometimes forging alliances or even deliberately pissing them off, to wangle the funds for some almighty firepower.

If it moves, and it isn't you, and especially isn't bigger than you, blow it the hell up

That's rubbish. You need to be closer to the boom. Talk to your mate above



Lie still while I break every bone in your arm, mate. Cheers. Call me Kelly

HAVOK BY NAME...

Only one mercenary is controlled per mission, and their objectives are filtered through PDA. No kidding, one of the directives we received was, 'There's a museum! Destroy it!' So we did, using a multi-million dollar, 5000-pound Bunker Buster that caused the entire scene to shake before the building collapsed in a mess of rubble and dust!

You can hijack more than 30 types of vehicle, including helicopters, armoured cars and tanks, plus there are over 30 kinds of weapon to create havoc. So it's appropriate then that what's making the carnage of bodies and vehicles flying everywhere look so realistic is the now-famous Havok physics engine. Overall, Mercs is definitely one to watch. *

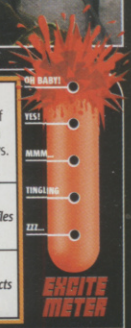
Call in an air strike then we'll see who's nasty. Meanwhile, somewhere to hide

CVG OPINION

It's like the A-Team gone ballistic, with a sack-full of dubious morals to explain away the no-mercy assault on the bad guys. Somehow we think we're going to love it.

WE LOVE
- You in a tank, them in a jeep
- You with air strikes, them with rifles
- Multiplayer looks set to be F-U-N

WE HATE
- Relentless, merciless killing
- Could be more about special effects than game skills



DEATH BY DEGREES

* PUBLISHER SONY
* DEVELOPER NAMCO
* OUT: FEBRUARY 2005

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Hot Tekken totty Nina Williams stars in her own videogame set after her victory in our fave fighting tournament. Resident Evil-style gameplay with analog stick combat and some cool Tekken cameos. Oh, Nina.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

WWW.NAMCO.COM/GAMES/DEATHBYDEGREES

The opening cutscene sees Nina parading around in her cheesewire bikini...

...before taking a quick dip. Totally shameless, but we can't help love it

Death By Degrees? It's a crap name, isn't it? Sounds like a murder mystery set in a university with some wrinkly-faced munter as the main character.

Shame, 'cos that couldn't be further from the truth. Tekken's ridiculously pert Nina Williams is the star, and like Catwoman last month she looks well fit. When we saw Nina in her bathing suit we just about choked on our crisps – then spent the next ten minutes squinting to look for spider's legs (there weren't any) as she highkicked goons in the face.

Okay, it's still the opening cutscene, but we had to show you this bit too

Stealth sections will see you hiding behind pillars and incapacitating guards with sleeper holds

Lots of puzzles involve finding cranks and giving them a good tug

The game starts after Nina's victory in the Tekken tournament. She's chilling on a cruise ship when Heihachi (who later makes a guest appearance along with a troop of JACK prototypes and Anna Williams) sends along his Mishima Zaibatsu goons to roast her oiled ass good.

SMELLS LIKE ZOMBIE

There's more than a faint whiff of Resident Evil about the gameplay. The action is viewed from fixed cameras, and there's a lot of 'get the crank and stick it in the hole' puzzles. The combat's clichéd too: it's controlled with jabs of the right analog stick like Catwoman and Rise To Honour.

You can scrap hand-to-hand with simple flicks, or use weapons by holding a shoulder button. Sure, it works better than most games that use this kind of system but still feels like a brutal simplification of Tekken's fighting complexity.

A Critical Hit targeting system that lets you snap bones in X-ray vision and some mini-games add variety, but it's Nina herself who steals the show. Do us a favour Namco – stick her name (and her booty) nice and big over that dodgy title. ✷

STICK IT TO 'EM

We reckon analog stick combat is a gimmick that's stuck around too long: you never get the sensation that you're actually battering someone.

Still, Death By Degrees does it better than any other game and you do get to flick your stick with loads of different weapons.

Go all Kill Bill on that ass by slashing away with twin katana blades

Cracking skulls is easier when you've got steel batons to do the hard work

The analog control works better for guns - just jab in a direction to aim and fire

Nina's signature moves are included, like her Evil Mist. Have a Polo, love

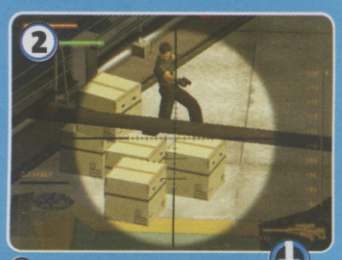
The art team had a vote and decided that not enough videogames use the colour blue

SNIPE DREAMS

The main gameplay's split up by old-fashioned puzzles, creepy-crawly stealth sections, and cool sniper mini-games like this.

Here you're protecting Alan, an MI6 agent who's helping Nina in her mission to infiltrate the KOMETA terrorist group... or is he?

Get to the top of the cruise ship and bust out your sniper rifle for some pinpoint killing



A woman checking out a buff man through a sniper scope – now THAT's what you call girl power

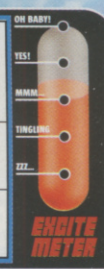
You can zoom in, plug baddies in the balls, then duck behind the wall to avoid detection. We love sniper bits!

CVG OPINION

Basic analog stick combat and derivative Resi gameplay are causes for concern, but looks lovely and name-drops a cool cast of Tekken favourites. **Graeme**

WE LOVE
- Eye-watering visuals
- Loads of moves and weapons
- Nice variety of play modes

WE HATE
- Lightweight analog stick scrapping
- Old-school Resi gameplay
- Stealth sections could suck



- PUBLISHER MICROSOFT
- DEVELOPER BIG BLUE BOX STUDIOS
- OUT: SEPTEMBER 2004

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

We go hands-on with Big Blue Box's ultra ambitious, free-roaming action role-player in an effort to become the Greatest Hero of All Time. And, good grief, it looks like there might have been something to the hype after all.

AVAILABLE ON

XBOX

WWW.FABLEGAME.COM

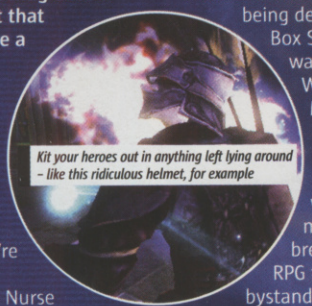
UPDATE

The sophisticated stats system tucked inside Fable means you can beef up into an unstoppable heroic force. Cool!

FABLE™

Okay, so we're dedicated to bringing you the World's best games mag once a month, but that aside, we're a little short on ambition here at the CVG offices.

Sure, Grazza's still trying to break the record for longest single solid game session on PES4 without his eyeballs drying up and fingernails cracking off – and hey, we're still working towards that physical examination with Nurse CVG – but it's not, well, it's just not Fable is it?



Kit your heroes out in anything left lying around – like this ridiculous helmet, for example

BIG BLUE BOASTS

In case you've had your head buried in a rhino for the last four years, Fable is being development by Big Blue Box Studios under the watchful eye of Black and White mastermind, Peter Molyneux, and is – in a word – ambitious. Or perhaps we should say AMBITIOUS. Indeed, we've been promised so much from their living, breathing fantasy world, RPG fans and casual bystanders should be tenting their pants in unison if Big Blue Box manages to pull it off.

Clutching our well-worn handbags of scepticism, we recently rode down to Molyneux's Lionhead Studios to go hands-on with a near-complete build of the gaming opus. Fable's being touted as an action RPG and, yup, all the genre trademarks are there. You'll hack and slash your way through majestic fantasy settings, cast spells with beardy wizards and clash swords with pig-ugly monsters in an effort to save the world and become Greatest Hero of All Time.

What makes Fable stand out from similar games like a stiffy at a nunnery is that every single decision you make during your quest, from innocent boy to battle-hardened hero, has a direct impact on the game world. Want to behave like a

"ACT LIKE AN ANGEL, HOLD DOORS FOR LADIES AND FART LIKE A PRO – YOU'LL BE WORSHIPPED AND REVERED"

Fable's many towns are perfect for getting a trim, loving the ladies and guffing boldly

There's only one combat button but you can bunch up blocks and spells to form massive combos

HOW DO YOU BEAT YOURS?

Fable's combat system is divided into three major disciplines: Marksmanship, Melee and Will. Or, to put it another way, arrows, swords and magic.

The discipline you favour in battle not only affects your physical appearance but, as a result, effects your other abilities and therefore the tasks you're best suited to.

Using the bow as your primary weapon turns you into an uber-sneaker, slippery like a Snake and lithe as gutter-ferret Garrett

Wield a sword enough in close quarters and you'll get beefier than Vin Diesel. You'll be a better fighter with bigger weapons too

Use magic too much and the strain will start to age you prematurely – you'll be pro at aggressive and defensive spells though

"WANT TO BEHAVE LIKE A COMPLETE COCK, PUNCH CHILDREN AND HARASS FARM ANIMALS? GO FOR IT!"

Yup, this is what happens if you kick chickens and refuse to eat your peas – naughty boy!

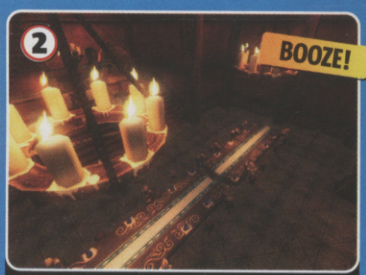
As you age throughout Fable, the initially childlike fantasy settings become much more horrific

ENJOY YOUR STAY!

While you rove around the wonderful world of Albion, there's a whole bunch of stuff to try out that'll make you giggle like a schoolgirl, grin like a psycho or gag like Monica Lewinsky.

Here are a few of our favourite highlights from the start of the game...

Flash that washboard stomach and the ladeez gush at the idea of getting jiggy time with you



Down some fine grog. Don't overdo it – nobody respects a hero that pukes on his own shoes

Too much to do? Crack off a slo-mo spell and watch as the hands of time drop to a crawl!

Enjoy Albion's plentiful and varied wildlife. Our faves are the 50ft Bollock Monsters

complete cock, punch children and harass farm animals? Go for it – just don't expect a warm welcome when you meet townsfolk on your travels. Similarly though, act like an angel, hold doors for ladies and fart like a pro – you'll be worshipped and revered.

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

Whatever you get up to, Fable always gives you plenty of feedback in response to your actions. When we strode into towns, inhabitants would either wave or run away when they spotted us hulking into view, depending on our reputation, and we often heard hushed voices yearning to climb into our pants or kick our asses.

Even our physical appearance altered as we explored – keep up the naughtiness and you'll grow menacing horns, but behave yourself and you'll look wizened and saintly like a medieval Bobby Robson.

The environments form one huge map but there's a massive amount of variety

The sheer amount of peripheral, non-quest specific stuff floored us too. You can trim your locks at the local barbers (prompting the townsfolk to copy your barnet as your popularity rises), buy your own home and shack up with one of the village beauties (or brutes) or even head to the tavern, get shit-faced and fanny around with pub games like Coin Golf.

WHAT'S THE STORY?

Of course, all this would be worthless without a proper story to sink your teeth into – actual plot details are firmly under wraps right now, but we know events unfold as you tackle key quests available at the Hero's Guild. Before each adventure, you'll have the opportunity to brag to the townsfolk and gamble your money and renown. Tell the crowds you'll come back completely unscathed or with all your party in tact and you'll be rolling in recognition and riches – we even promised to complete one mission in nothing but our flimsy knickers!

You're pretty much free to crack quests at your leisure and the mechanics for doing so are spot on right now. The controls are straightforward, smooth and responsive – even allowing for some sophisticated combo moves – and the game looks and sounds absolutely drop-dead gorgeous.

Sure, a paltry two hours of swash-buckling and heroism was barely enough to dent Fable's corset of rich ideas, but our tantalizing glimpse of gameplay cleavage has us itching to pop its norks out in the open when the game is released at the end of this year. ✷

Yes, Fable even caters for the soccer demon in you. We like to call this game Foot-bonce

Either there's some magic going down here, or our hero's having his own private disco

The townsfolk won't be inviting you down the pub for a quick half when you start looking like this

CVG OPINION Could be one of the best RPGs ever... so long it doesn't follow some of Molyneux's other hugely ambitious titles that ran out of steam halfway through. **Matt W**

WE LOVE
- Sense of freedom is astounding
- Tons to do even without quests
- Looking like living up to its promises

WE HATE
- Boyhood sections are horribly twee
- It's far too easy to get lost
- It might still go half-assed later on

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...

TimeSplitters: Future Perfect

- PUBLISHER: EA
- DEVELOPER: FREE RADICAL
- OUT: 2005
- x16 ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Free Radical lobs you into more chaotic time-leaping scenarios stretching from 1914 to 2401. Hundreds of new unlockable weapons, characters and maps, plus even crazier ultra-fast twitch-shooting than before.

AVAILABLE ON

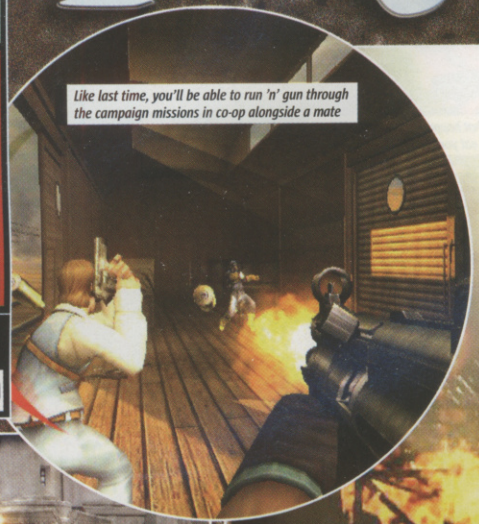
PS2

ALSO ON

XBOX, CUBE

WWW.EA.COM

UPDATE



Like last time, you'll be able to run 'n' gun through the campaign missions in co-op alongside a mate

Gunships never fail to be cool as hell. Here you've got to dive into cover to avoid getting cut to sheds

There'll be heaps more vehicles in Future Perfect and you'll be able to pilot many of them

Monkeys that resemble bizarre miniature sex dolls, killer cowgirls, flaming aliens, giant gollums. TimeSplitters 2 wasn't the most conventional first-person blaster out there, but that's exactly why Free Radical's series became such an exciting alternative to the usual line-up of straightforward sci-fi and wartime shooters.

For it's latest incarnation, Future Perfect, TimeSplitters continues the quirky tradition of crackpot characters, off-the-wall weapons, wicked set-piece gunfights, snappy controls and scary monkeys.

PLAYING WITH THE PAST

Again you play ballsy badass Cortez in the single-player campaign, ducking back and forth through time. But this time it's not just to give you a variety of different weapons and settings.

Now there'll be moments when Cortez meets up with past and future versions of himself, and you'll have to help your time-travelling double. You'll be battling side-by-side and often trying to remedy mistakes that have taken place in the past. And with more puzzles promised, this sets up the possibility of some wicked time-sensitive brain-ticklers. That said, the focus is still on blazing arcade blasting action and going berserk with cool new guns and gadgets.

It wasn't broke so Free Radical has kept the control system identical to the set-up in TimeSplitters 2

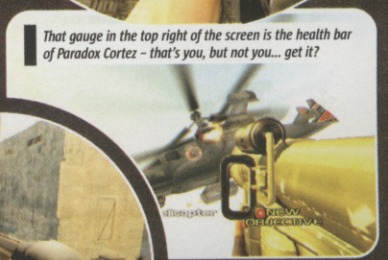
Along with old favourites, there'll be stacks of blinding new damager-doers, like an explosive flare gun that feels like an atomic hand-cannon. And Free Radical's slick new adventure Second Sight obviously influenced one of the major new gizmos – a gravity gun.

As in Second Sight, you can levitate bodies and hurl them as dangerous projectiles. You're also able to chuck and stack objects as well as interact with switches and items that you'd otherwise never be able to reach.

You won't be able to rely on this futuristic technology in every era, however, you can interact with your surroundings more than before and even drive most of the vehicles that appear in a stage.

So with more explosive single-player scenarios, a new arcade mode featuring intense mini-games and challenges, and the inclusion of beefed-up online multiplayer action, Future Perfect has got us stroking our monkeys with fur-lined excitement.✷

The train level looks wicked, with a stylish haze effect shimmering the scenery all around you



That gauge in the top right of the screen is the health bar of Paradox Cortez – that's you, but not you... get it?

One stage set in Scotland in 1924 reminded us of Return To Castle Wolfenstein's opener

GUNNING FOR ONLINE

We're still playing TimeSplitters 2 link-up multiplayer, it's that awesome. But Future Perfect gives us what we all prayed for: 16-player online action on both PS2 and Xbox (no news on what set-up GameCube owners will be getting, though).

Plus you'll be able to set up your own tournaments and leagues! And now you can trade maps that you've created in the Map Maker mode while you're online, so there'll never be a shortage of slick-looking arenas. Especially as the Map Maker option has been revamped so that you can make areas even more detailed, with new touches like applying stunning textures.

Free Radical is keeping details of its new multiplayer modes under wraps

The maps you create are super small in file size so they'll upload in no time

CVG OPINION

Its minty fresh arsenal, tighter solo time-travelling campaign and improved multiplayer and map-making features should make it worth giving tons of time to. **Mike**

WE LOVE

- Meeting yourself as you time hop
- Using an anti-gravity device to cause damage and solve puzzles

WE HATE

- Visuals much like TS2's
- Some of the levels feel to linear with little room for exploration

ATTENTION, CLASS...

'Cos we're about to kick some ass! Conker's multiplayer lets you choose between six different classes of soldier.

They change slightly between each environment – so in a World War I themed environment you can expect muddy combat fatigues, bi-planes and tanks, while in Future War it's all chrome armour and Halo-style vehicles. But whatever the time frame, you essentially choose from either infantry, stealth experts, heavy weapons dudes, Skyjockeys, snipers or incendiary experts.

Skyjockeys can hop into planes and spaceships to bring the pain from above

Snipers are armed with telescopic rifles that bust melons in bloody headshots

Sneakers are stealthy chicks who can go in disguise, turn invisible, and lop off heads!

Conker LIVE & RELOADED™

- PUBLISHER MICROSOFT
- DEVELOPER RARE
- OUT: MARCH

ONLINE GAMING | x4

IN A NUTSHELL

Multiplayer shooty madness starring a bunch of foul-mouthed Squirrels and Tediz. Multiple classes add a team-based spin to the action, and a port of the old N64 game provides some single-player laughs.

AVAILABLE ON

XBOX

WWW.RAREWARE.COM

There are shedloads of vehicles to razz around like a mentalist – or blow up!

Yeah, it's three years old, but it's still a pretty good single-player game – and we still love the jokes

The diversity of weapons and vehicles means teamwork is essential if you're gonna succeed

There's a massive pile of crap on the screen. It's called Poovarotti. It's singing a song about scat. "You're the first people in the world to see this!" says an excited American women.

Thanks love, but we actually witnessed this particular piece of poo-based craziness FOUR YEARS AGO in our mate's bedroom. This pretty much sums up everything you need to know about Conker's single-player mode: there's loads of jobbie, loads of swear words, and it's a port of an old N64 game tarted up with some Xbox slap.

Old buck-tooth himself's even got an Xbox makeover. Check the fur FX, yo

To win a battle you've got to capture strategic points, then storm the enemy base. Work those tactics

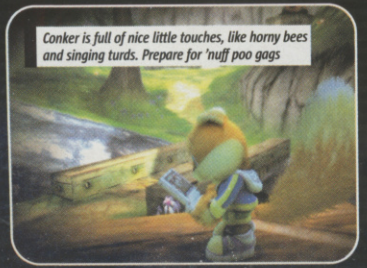
Plays a bit funny, though. The third-person view makes targeting awkward, the controls feel sluggish and the weapons we tried were unsatisfying and unreactive, although much cooler stuff like acid-throwers and camera-guided missiles should liven things up. Killing people takes too long thanks to over-generous energy bars, and annoying damage animations render you powerless to avoid other incoming attacks.

These are definitely things that could – and probably will – get cleaned up. The variety of modes, characters, vehicles and environments in multiplayer makes up for the mouldy single-player, and if the teamwork-focused gameplay works Conker could still be the nuts.✷

NUTS IN YOUR MOUTH

Rare want you to see this as a bonus to the Xbox Live-supported multiplayer game, but it still sucks that we're being shovelled an old game. Still, if you've never experienced the wee squirrel's weirdly adult adventure it's definitely worth a chuckle.

As for the multiplayer stuff, up to 16 players choose from six classes from either the Squirrels or the Tediz. Two different environments diversify things even further: you can go from WWI trenches to ultra-futuristic moonbases in a single session.

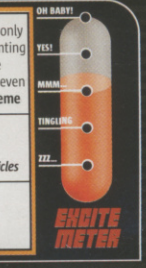


Conker is full of nice little touches, like horny bees and singing turds. Prepare for 'nuff poo gags

CVG OPINION Rehashed one-player is only a bonus but is disappointing and multiplayer – while better than at E3 – ain't perfect. Expect even more nut-tightening before release. **Graeme**

WE LOVE
- Crude sense of humour
- Loads of online options
- Stuffed with weapons and vehicles

WE HATE
- Sticky, slow controls
- Guns feel wimpy
- No new one-player mode



Chilla can grab enemies and lob them onto his spikey back, then pluck them off and chuck 'em!

KAMEO

- PUBLISHER MICROSOFT
- DEVELOPER RARE
- OUT: DEC

PS2

RAREWARE.COM

How's this for cool design? When you take on one of Kameo's huge bosses (they're awesomely big) you can't defeat him unless you unleash loads of tiny imps from their jail cells, who'll then swarm and prod him with their wee sticks.

Then you've got to morph into a man-eating plant, pick up a mouthful of the little critters and spit them onto the towering limbs of the boss. Then – good grief – you've got to morph into a Yeti and chuck a spear of ice at the imps, who are now clinging on for dear life. Hit them square on and they'll explode – they're exploding imps, see – and damage the boss! Genius!

The whole game's filled with really clever moments like this, so you'll get plenty of chance to morph Kameo's elfin arse into ten different monsters and use their unique abilities and control systems to defeat enemies and puzzles. It does look pretty linear, which could mean the imaginative showdowns are connected by dull processions through levels. ✷

Some of the boss characters are stupidly massive, filling the whole screen – and then some

That's Kameo, but most of the time she'll be in her less attractive monster form

WE LOVE
- Fookin' MASSIVE bosses
- Cool control systems
- Lots of different playable monsters

WE HATE
- Linear levels and puzzles
- Weird combat controls
- Feels a bit old-fashioned

WARHAMMER 40,000: DAWN OF WAR

* PUBLISHER
THQ
* DEVELOPER
RELIC
* OUT: SEPTEMBER

PS2

THQ.CO.UK

Tabletop gaming's frikkin' nerdy, right? It's boring, yeah? Well then, Dawn Of War's greatest achievement is making you forget all that in the click of a mouse.

Order your Space Marines to attack an armoured Ork position in standard RTS fashion and you'll be assaulted with a totally non-nerdy, non-boring explosion of futuristic carnage.

Hardcore fans should be happy too, because four races – Space Marine, Ork, Eldar and Chaos Legion – are detailed to an impressive degree and there's a whole bunch of accurate units to thrash. When it all kicks off it brings the Warhammer universe to life better than any game yet.

The RTS gameplay places tactical superiority above dull resource management, with bigger, spikier units becoming available as you progress. Don't worry about rules or fourteen-sided dice or sweaty men with beards: this is full-on combat strategising that should blow apart your preconceptions of tabletop gaming. And you still get to paint your Marines in your favourite colour! *

The RTS action is fast and frantic. Go in Bolters blazing and don't let up till they're Ork mush

The detail's so sweet you can almost smell the acrylic paint and funky man-sweat

Some of the later units like Dreadnoughts and Terminators are triple-hard bastards

WE LOVE
- Awesome visual carnage
- Brings Warhammer to life
- Loads of imaginative units

WE HATE
- AI still a bit ropey
- Can't enter buildings
- Could turn you into a nerd turd

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...

EYETOY: CHAT

* PUBLISHER
SONY
* DEVELOPER
SONY LONDON STUDIOS
* OUT: SEPTEMBER

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Turn your PS2 into a videophone, save hundreds of pounds on phone calls, leave video messages for you mates, play three wee games while you're talking, make loads of new pals. It's the best thing ever, honest!

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

WWW.EYETOY.COM

Chat rooms let you shoot the shizzle with loads of pals – try and make it a bit more interesting than this

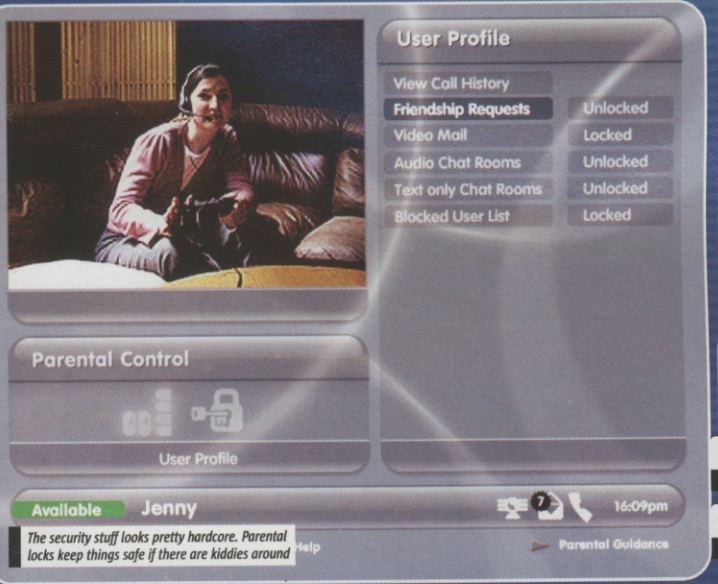
That Dirty Den off EastEnders will love this. With Chat, mucky buggers can hook EyeToy up to a PS2 and expose themselves to housewives across the world.

Don't worry, though – you won't get surprised by a wrinkly todger winking at you unless you've given it the green light. Sony is really keen to push how secure the Chat system is. You can't talk to someone unless you both agree to it, you can lockout other users if they're being nobs, and a team of moderators will take swift action against any reported misuse.

That's the dull security stuff. The exciting thing about Chat is that it could – and we're not blowing smoke up your arse here – change the way you use your PS2. It's like endless free phone calls, but with video too! The image quality's decent and the system automatically adjusts to the speed of the connection – 256k is fine, if you're interested.

Even more fun is leaving them abusive video messages of up to 30 seconds long, or video chatting with 16 other users at once, or text chatting with up to 256 users.

Most exciting of all is Chat's potential to change online gaming by sticking your gloating mug on the screen. This Is Football 2005 should be the first game to utilise this feature, so imagine banging one past your mate then sticking your fingers up in his face, while you're hundred of miles apart! All that, and it's going to cost less than a full-price game. Trust us, you should be excited about Chat, even if you're not into winky-waving. *



VIDEO GAMES

If you get bored just talking and making abusive hand gestures or just want to make a new friend, hook up with one of three games.

Choose from chess, checkers, or Naval War (Sony's version of battleships). Hey, it's better than whacking out your white owl...

Chess is so old it was invented by a highly-intelligent Velociraptor. Even he didn't see this coming

These games are well handy if you're talking to someone with the personality of a loofah. Oh, sorry matey

Right, imagine the checkers board is Pro Evo. See? It'd be ace! We like Paulina, too, but she's not included

CVG OPINION

We'll need a good go when we get one in the office, but this smells like it could be an essential purchase for PS2 users with broadband – and chat's a fact. **Graeme**

WE LOVE
- Simple to set up
- Water-tight security
- Saves you a fortune on the phone

WE HATE
- We wish the gaming stuff was already implemented
- Not enough customisation options

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...

* PUBLISHER
THQ
* DEVELOPER
YUKE'S
* OUT:
SEPTEMBER

ONLINE GAMING

x4

IN A NUTSHELL

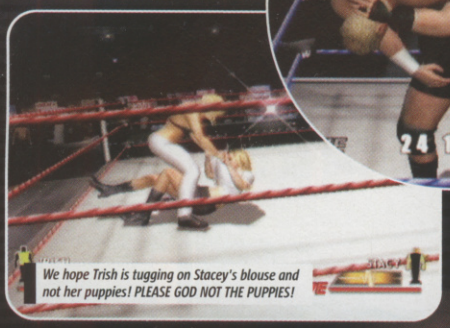
With the Wrestlemania branding heading to Xbox it's a new direction for the WWE on Cube, with a title that borrows the best bits from THQ's previous wrestling hits. Divas fighting in bras and panties? Bring it on!

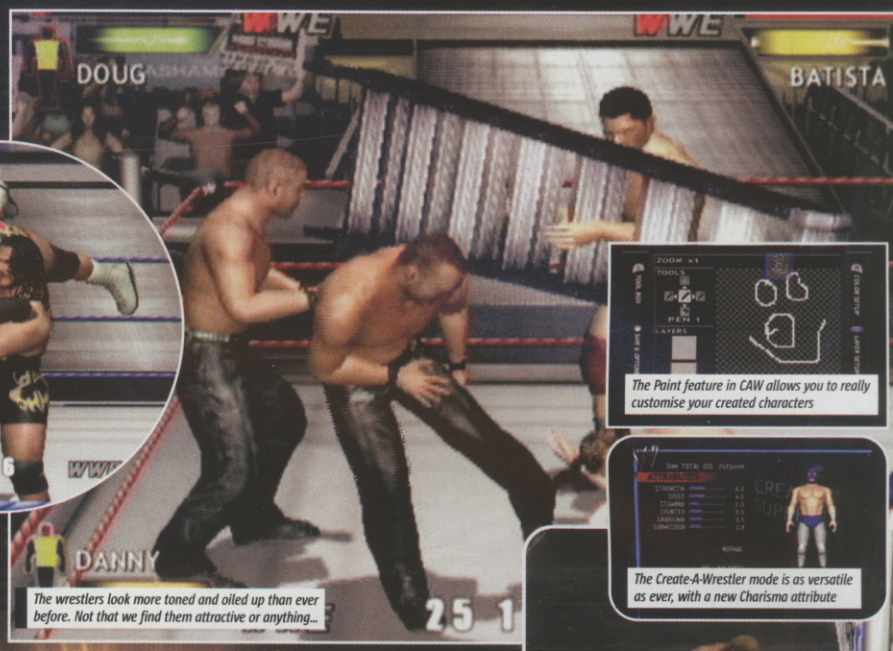
AVAILABLE ON

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

WWW.THQ.COM

By timing it right you can unleash a Momentum Shift, switching the health bars of both opponents!

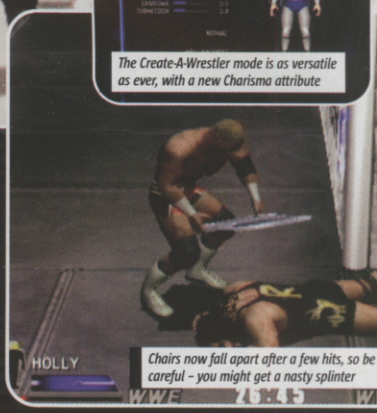

We hope Trish is tugging on Stacey's blouse and not her puppies! PLEASE GOD NOT THE PUPPIES!



The wrestlers look more toned and oiled up than ever before. Not that we find them attractive or anything...

The Paint feature in CAW allows you to really customise your created characters

The Create-A-Wrestler mode is as versatile as ever, with a new Charisma attribute

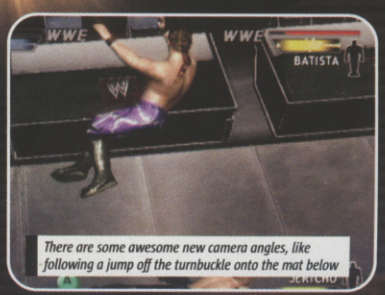


Chairs now fall apart after a few hits, so be careful – you might get a nasty splinter

WWE DAY OF RECKONING

When the hell did wrestling get so complicated? WWE boss Vince McMahon has been cracking heads over his videogames, with the result that THQ has had to re-brand the titles across all formats.

The reason behind the change is simple... sort of. The PS2 SmackDown! series utilises both the SmackDown! and Raw rosters, so calling it SmackDown! doesn't quite work anymore, hence the forthcoming SmackDown! Vs Raw. Right. Then there's Wrestlemania – the WWE's biggest pay-per-view that airs every March. With the Xbox WWE titles in a development cycle that means they hit stores in the spring, it's only logical to pass the Wrestlemania branding over to the Xbox. With the previous titles already used, the GameCube release needed a new name and that name is WWE Day Of Reckoning! Easy, eh?



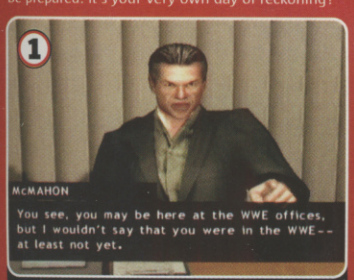
There are some awesome new camera angles, like following a jump off the turnbuckle onto the mat below

Keep an eye on the commands that pop up in the bottom of the screen to activate Specials

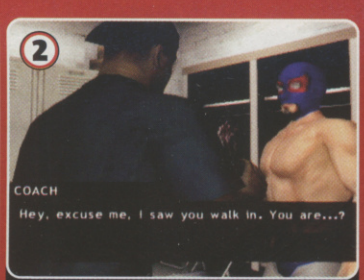
WHO IS THIS MASKED MAN?

Day Of Reckoning gets its title from the game's unique Story mode. Here you create a new superstar and work your way up through the ranks of the WWE.

Starting from scratch, your potential superstar goes into developmental training before being called up to Heat, then finally exploding into the main shows. As you progress you'll meet superstars who give you advice or start feuds, and eventually you face off with your biggest foes at Wrestlemania! Be prepared: it's your very own day of reckoning!

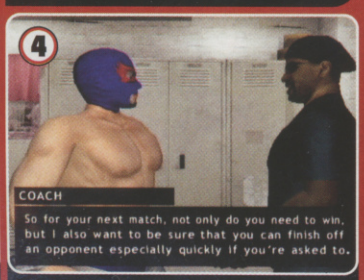


The Story mode begins with Vince sending you to the development leagues



The Coach thinks he's spotted the next big thing, and dammit that sucka fool's right

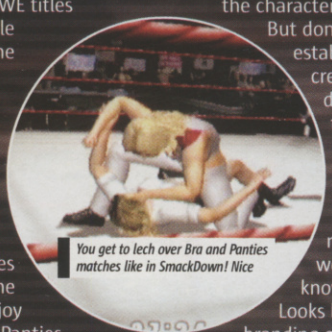
You'll have to fight your way through loads of weedy no-hopers to get noticed



As you progress new challenges are laid down by the different characters you meet

CAN YOU DIG IT, SUCKA?

THQ has gone to great lengths this year to give the cross-format WWE titles individual identities while keeping the quality of the game mechanics high across the board. With wrestling specialists Yuke's back on development duties, Day Of Reckoning boasts a lot of similarities to SmackDown! Here Comes The Pain. For starters, the Divas (and us) get to enjoy flange-flapping Bra and Panties matches, there's the inclusion of grizzled Legends and submission moves work in the same way.


You get to lech over Bra and Panties matches like in SmackDown! Nice

New features include realistic weighting on weapons – they cause more damage but shatter after a couple of hits. There's also Momentum Shift, a special move that switches your health meter with your opponent to flip the script instantly. It's a great way of introducing the back-and-forth action that's such a big part of wrestling.

If the new gameplay features and tweaks weren't enough, the expanded roster of wrestlers really look the business with awesome lighting effects showing off the character models to their finest. But don't get caught up with the established names: DoR's create-a-wrestler mode is deeper and more complex than ever, and the story game lets you take your brawler from obscurity to the top turnbuckle.

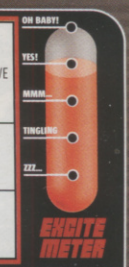
Vince McMahon might have crap hair and wear stupid suits, but he knows how to do business. Looks like the change of branding on this scrapper might help it compete with SmackDown! Vs Raw for the heavyweight videogame belt.

CVG OPINION

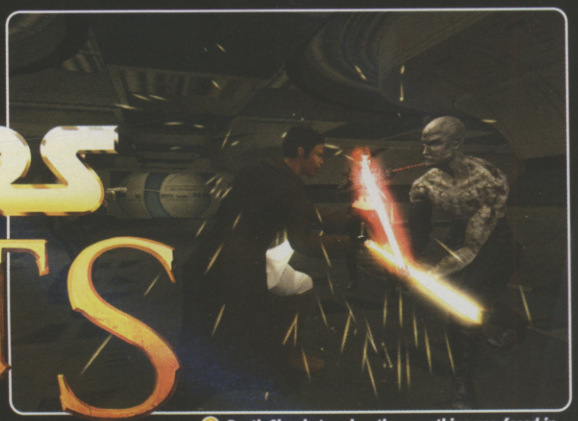
Bigger and brawnier than Cube's previous wrestling bouts, DoR feels like a WWE greatest hits package and is shaping up to be another rock-solid title. **Alex H**

WE LOVE
- Story mode looks ace
- Realistic momentum feature
- Loads of unlockables

WE HATE
- Camera angle feels too close
- No reverses on Special Moves



STAR WARS KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC II



Darth Sion is tougher than anything you faced in KOTOR put together and times 20!

* PUBLISHER ACTIVISION
* DEVELOPER OBSIDIAN ENTERTAINMENT
* OUT: DECEMBER

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Bigger levels, better graphics, and more feats and Force powers are promised in the sequel to last year's BAFTA-winning game. Align yourself with good or evil – your choices will signal victory or defeat for the evil Sith Lords.

AVAILABLE ON

XBOX

ALSO ON

PC

WWW.LUCASARTS.COM/GAMES/SWKOTOR_SITHLORDS/

The Harbinger's medical bay, shortly after Darth Sion lost his rag with the nit nurse

Oh boy, we know we're going to get lost in here. Keep this sketch for reference, lads

A fearsome new villain will feature in the sequel to the impossibly cool Knights Of The Old Republic. Resisting the temptation to succumb to his evil ways and joining the most powerful force in the galaxy is the central struggle in KOTOR II.

If you think you had a tough time against the Sith in the original KOTOR, it's nothing to what Sith Lord Darth Sion has in store with KOTOR II. Thankfully, your character has equally fearsome tools to combat Sion with or – and here's the twist – to help you become the embodiment of evil yourself!

Escape Pods aboard the Harbinger. No life forms on board, etc...

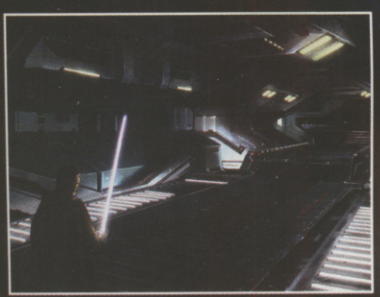
NO PRESSURE

Events take place five years after those in KOTOR, during which the Jedi were almost completely wiped out by the Sith. In fact, at the start of KOTOR II, many believe your character to be the last remaining Jedi in the world. Not that you are even a fully-fledged Jedi, but a Jedi Initiate yet to reach his full potential – and this too is key to the game. It is a huge turning point in the history of the Jedi, as you go in search of others who may exist in galaxies far, far away. You are under extreme pressure to switch allegiance to the Dark Side, and indeed have the option to exchange your blue saber for red – a decision that not only affects you, but those around you.

Typical of peace-loving cities everywhere, Iziz becomes a magnet for those looking for trouble

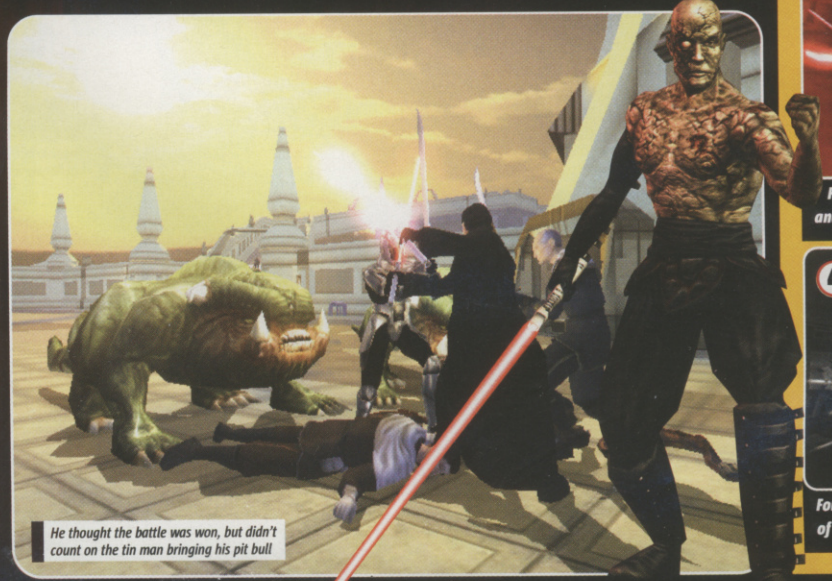
HANGING IN THE BALANCE

Choices you make in KOTOR, who you killed and so on, affect how the story turns out, but in KOTOR II the consequences of your actions also affect everyone in your team.



On board the Harbinger, Darth Sion's ship. It just oozes Star Wars atmosphere, doesn't it?

The peace-loving city of Iziz on the planet Onderon. Go here to receive quests and gather info



He thought the battle was won, but didn't count on the tin man bringing his pit bull

GET JEDI TO ROCK!

Have a gander at a fistful of new Force powers coming your way in KOTOR II.

These are all Dark skills as far as we know, but rest assured all goodie-goodie powers will be equally as impressive – it's just that LucasArts knows how twisted we are on CVG! Developer Obsidian went all out to impress with SFX in the sequel, and succeeded.

1

Use your mind to hoist the victim in the air, and twist their bones using Force Crush!

2

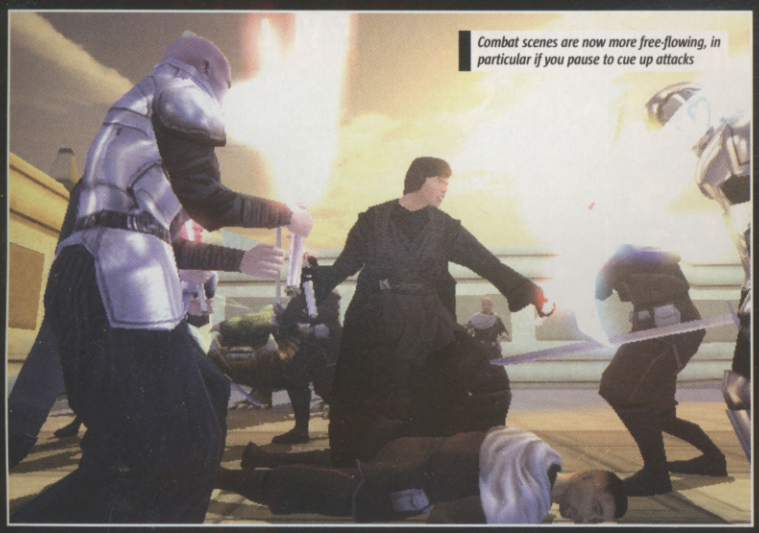
It's okay to scream when you're a Jedi, but only a Force Scream that looks like this

3

Force Fury gives a Jedi increased power, and boosts the amount of EXP from battles

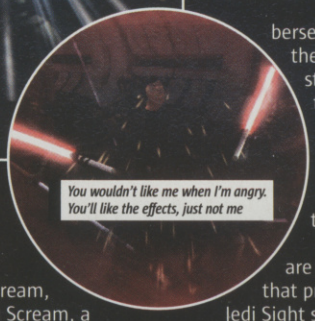
4

Force powers can be good or evil, and some of the best ones are evil... tough decision



Combat scenes are now more free-flowing, in particular if you pause to cue up attacks

Xbox is pushed even further toward its technical limits with mesmerising SFX



You wouldn't like me when I'm angry. You'll like the effects, just not me

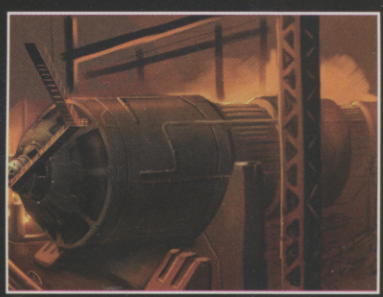
Choose to follow the Dark Side and allies will abandon you, and in some cases fight against you. Characters even decide whether or not to join your party according to your allegiance, good or evil. For example, if you encourage the peace-loving people of Iziz to get all fired up and try fighting the Sith instead of seeking a peaceful solution that would not endanger their lives, you encourage a little more Dark Side to enter your soul.

Replay value in this respect is assuredly huge for KOTOR II, if not purely to see what the many Force powers are capable of.

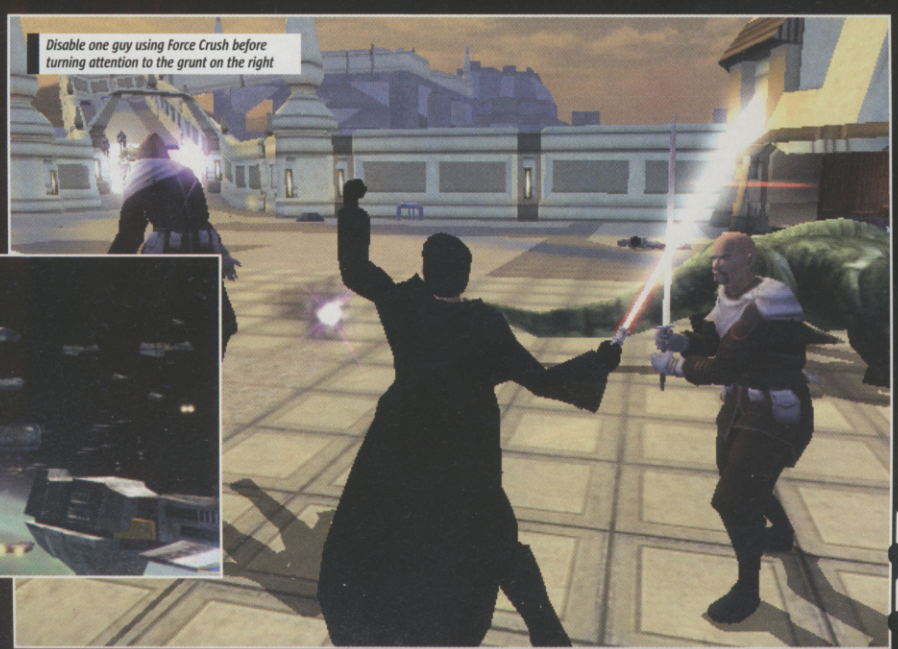
FORCES TO RECKON WITH

With the Force as its central theme, LucasArts is promising over 30 new Force powers to master in KOTOR II. Among the best are three Dark powers: Scream, Fury and Crush. Using Scream, a Jedi can literally yell to create a shockwave that surrounds him. Fury briefly infuses a Jedi with supernatural abilities suitable for use in a melee (similar to a Viking's berserker rage) and also increases the amount of EXP gained from strikes. Crush... well, this is the sort of thing you'd love to do to your worst enemy: pick them up off the ground using the force of your mind, then break every bone in their body!

On the lighter side, there are powers such as Jedi Sight that provide strategic assistance. Jedi Sight senses the alignment of individuals helping to pick them out from a crowd, showing up red if evil, blue if good, and grey if neutral. It will be a huge task to learn all those available in the game, and require at least one more play-through of KOTOR II to get a taste of both worlds.



Judging by the size of the staircase, the engine in the Harbinger is GODDAM HUGE!



Disable one guy using Force Crush before turning attention to the grunt on the right

As a Jedi Initiate your task is to find out why Onderon is under siege from the Sith

RUN-IN WITH THE DEVIL

We're told to expect a greater diversity of non-player characters in KOTOR II, so as to avoid spookily running into the same old faces all through the game. In addition, every character you speak to is voiced in its own language; those who speak alien languages such as Wookies will be subtitled – ain't that cool!

We're keeping our fingers crossed that this will make the story more compelling and believable, and hopefully this will mean encounters with Darth Sion, the venomous new Sith Lord, will be mind-blowingly intense!

FASTER THAN YOU CAN SAY FASHOOM

Combat is modified in KOTOR II to be faster than before, something that will hopefully be more appealing to a less hardcore audience.

Actions can be cued up while pausing the game, instead of having to think on the fly, making sequences more enjoyable to watch if you've assigned the best tactics. Of course, you could cue up a disaster – but it'll still look cool!

Fights are handled mostly the same as in KOTOR, so pros will have the advantage

Spectacular dual-wielding lightsaber battles look terrific, without much slowdown

Take time out to pause the game and make sure you get the right attacks in place

The Sith hate the Jedi, so don't give them a second chance... or even a first one

CVG OPINION Looks set to surpass KOTOR in every conceivable way, and is created with a real passion for what makes Star Wars so great when handled with respect. **Paul**

WE LOVE
- Massively expanded Force powers
- Bigger locations, lots of new faces
- Corrupting innocents with Dark Side

WE HATE
- Still some slowdown in battles
- 'Optional' combat for dummies
- No multiplayer option. Bah!

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...

"PARK UP TO A WALL AND PAUSE, YOUR HIGH-TECH SUIT SENDS YOU INVISIBLE"

SPY FICTION

- PUBLISHER: SAMMY
- DEVELOPER: ACCESS
- OUT: TBA

IN A NUTSHELL

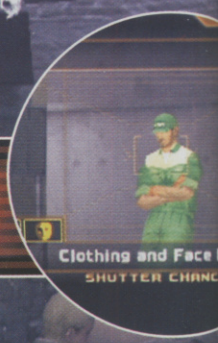
Splinter Cell meets Metal Gear Solid, with even more ludicrous gadgets and plotlines. Hang from ceilings with spider claws, swap faces with the enemy and see through walls – sounds kinda familar, doncha think?

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

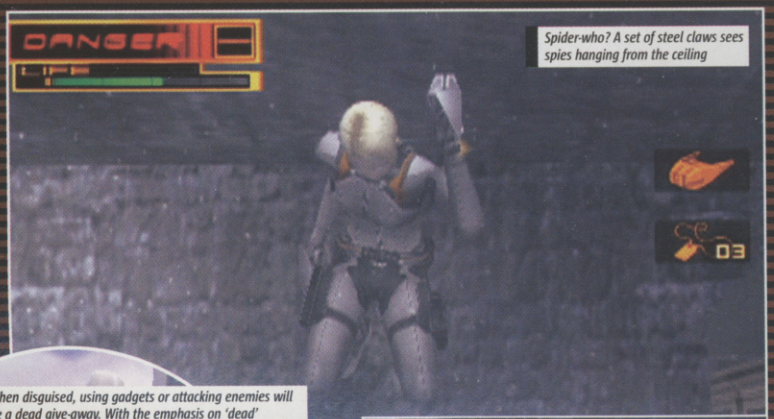
WWW.SPYFICTIONCOM

Brian always knew his giant red target-shaped birthmark would be the death of him

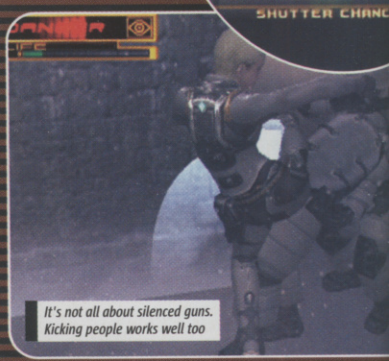


There's so many spy games out now, it's a wonder MI5 doesn't have recruitment stalls in GAME. It also means any new entrant to the field had better be suaver than Bond, tougher than Snake and sneakier than Mr Fisher. So, does Spy Fiction have it all? Well, while not up there in the big league on this showing, it does have more gadgets than... um, the Gadget Shop.

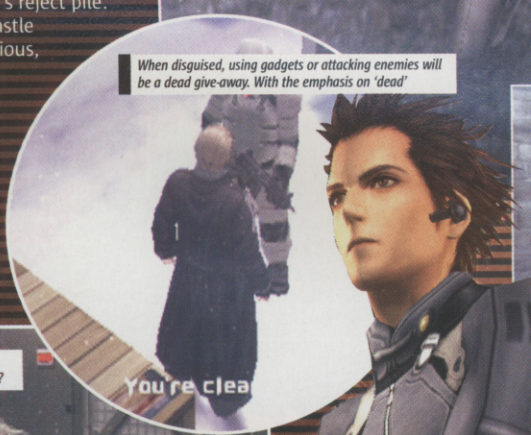
The plot, dialogue and characters in Spy Fiction all seem to have been borrowed from Metal Gear's reject pile. You've got to break into Castle Wolfgang to stop a mysterious, and possibly superhuman, terrorist cell codenamed Enigma (oh, how very... enigmatic), and disarm their improbably-named bio-weapon Lada. Sorry, Lahder. That means parachuting in, meeting up with an inside man and generally kicking arse in a sneaky fashion.



Spider-who? A set of steel claws sees spies hanging from the ceiling


It's not all about silenced guns. Kicking people works well too

When disguised, using gadgets or attacking enemies will be a dead give-away. With the emphasis on 'dead'



Crates with kit inside: do games designers love them more than high-caffeine cola? Discuss

Weak excuses for getting past guards. What next, the dog ate my homework?

A bathroom break?

NECK SNAPPIN' TIME

Gameplay boils down to your usual mix of watching guard patterns, sneaking up behind them and giving them a permanent neck massage. The key differences between this and Metal Gear? The graphics are nowhere near as good, the accents and storyline laughable, and there's no radar.

Instead, guards actually project a visible cone so you can see where they're looking on screen. This idea makes the levels much less a large puzzle to be solved simultaneously and more a small puzzle to be broken down, guard-by-guard. Unfortunately this good idea seems only to be implemented sporadically so far.

What has been put in completely, and is where Spy Fiction leaves us feeling shaken and stirred, is the kitbox. Your backpack is like a Toys R Us, only with cool things. Face-capturing cameras (see Face/Off box), ceiling-hanging claws, goggles that let you see in the dark, through walls and loose clothing (we may have dreamt that last one), even a body suit that turns you invisible when stationary. It's these gadgets then that will save this stealth actioner from sneaking past unnoticed. ✶

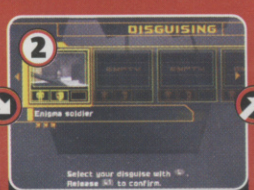
FACE/OFF

So, what's the best gadget in Spy Fiction's overstocked toybox? For our money, it's undoubtedly the 3DA camera.

Line up a good shot of someone with it and you get their face and their uniform captured. Then it's simply a matter of finding somewhere to hide and change.

Oh, and not forgetting the small matter of making sure you choose the most appropriate disguise for the particular area you're in. Get it all wrong and you'll stick out like a donkey's nob on a nun's nose.

"A smelly and dark place. Perfect for changing into my shiny new guard outfit"



Hmm, decisions, decisions. Choose your disguise from the mugshots you've taken so far

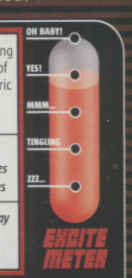
You went in a spy, you come out a menial guard with one red eye. So much for promotion

CVG OPINION

Apart from the face-stealing camera, there's not a lot of standout stuff here. Generic Euro accents meet forgettable castle locations and MGS wannabe gameplay. Si

WE LOVE
- THAT camera. We want one
- Levels mixing enemies and puzzles
- Dumpster-diving for info and clues

WE HATE
- Snake/ Sam on-the-cheap gameplay
- Ludicrous accents and plots
- Too many rarely-useful gadgets



ONE FRUITY, CHEWY BITE
WAS ALL IT TOOK
TO UNLEASH
THE DEVASTATING FORCE...
© Masterfoods 2004
Taste the Rainbow
Skittles

CRISIS ZONE

- PUBLISHER SONY
- DEVELOPER NAMCO
- OUT: SEPTEMBER

PS2

WWW.SCEE.COM

Namco didn't invent lightgun games, but they invented the 'breaking cover' aspect that made them about eighty times more thrilling.

You start, crouched behind a box. Gunfire crashes past overhead. There's a split-second respite, and you pop up, blazing off rounds like a maniac. Awesome. What have they invented that's new for Crisis Zone? Basically nothing. But they've taken that massive degree of environmental interactivity that made us all crap our pants at the opening exchanges of Metal Gear Solid 2, and applied it to Time Crisis.

So you're in a sports shop. You shoot footballs, and they pop. Tennis ball cans explode, pinging furry yellow projectiles across the screen. In the CD shop, you can blaze rows of albums off the shelves. You might get so involved in destroying stuff you forget to slay the hordes of terrorists rolling about everywhere. Then you die. Then you press continue. Then you remember. DIE, BITCHES! ✷

The carnage is absolutely constant. It's exciting as hell. But it's short. You guessed that already, though

The bad guys have energy bars now. You really have to leather them and that feels great

What else are you going to do with your lightgun? What's that smell? Oh my God, you DIDN'T!

WE LOVE
- Destroying absolutely everything
- The new tough guy enemies
- Shopping centre shootouts

WE HATE
- It's sweet, but SOOOO short
- Ace with a gun, nob with a pad
- It's not Usher CDs you get to destroy

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...

- PUBLISHER SONY
- DEVELOPER RELENTLESS
- OUT: AUTUMN

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

After the twin-peaked commercial and critical successes of EyeToy and Singstar, Sony finally gets its hits out for the LADS. Twin wheels of steel for you to make like Pete Tong. Superstar DJs? Here we go...

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

WWW.SCEE.COM

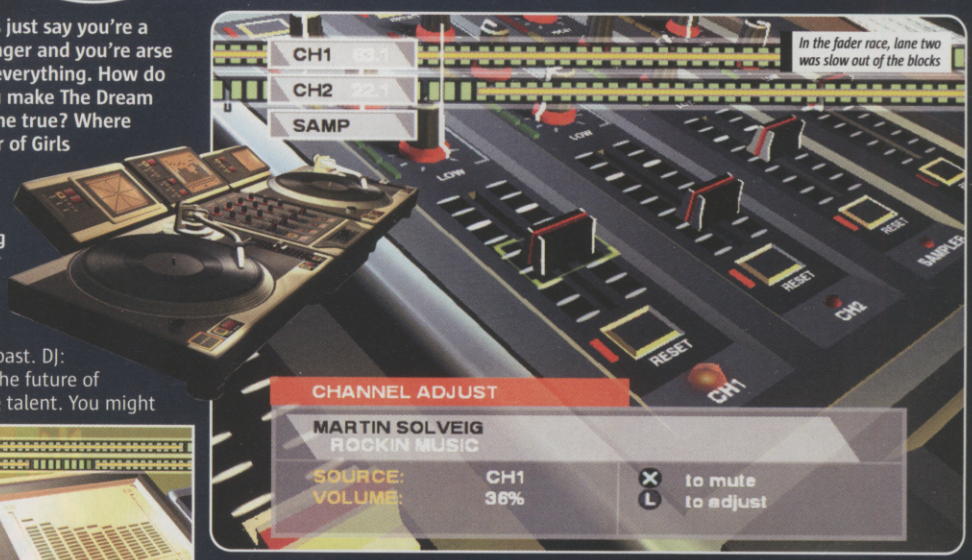
They've even got pitch control on the decks. Loving that detail

See the green bars at the top? That's what music looks like to us pros

DJ: DECKS & FX

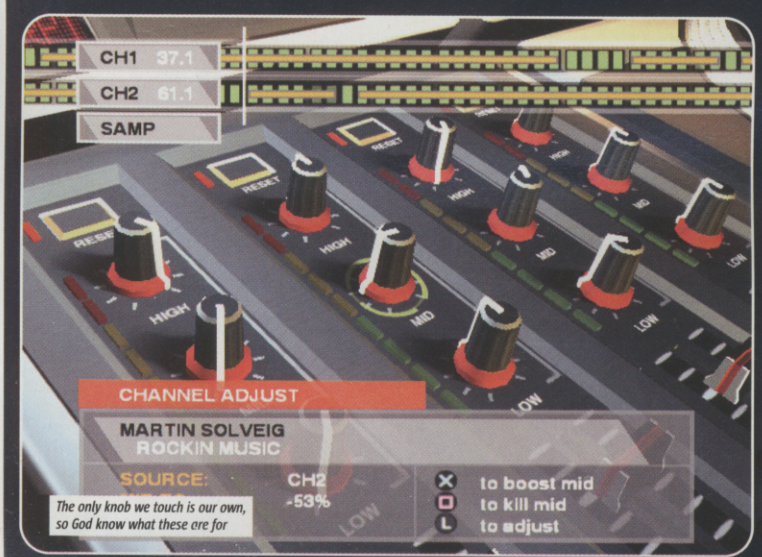
Let's just say you're a minger and you're arse at everything. How do you make The Dream come true? Where you're boffing four of Girls Aloud on a pile of money, while the ginger one is downstairs making you a bacon sandwich? Easy. You become a DJ.

Remember the Music series? The past. DJ: Decks & Effects is the future of pretending to have talent. You might think 'virtual' decks might work about as well as Stephen Hawking in an egg and spoon race, but you'd be wrong. You cue up a couple of tracks on the wheels of steel – actual tunes too, none of this made-up shite – and you watch some bars to sync them.



In the fader race, lane two was slow out of the blocks

As you can see, the economy is sliding irrevocably towards a recession



DECK 'EM ALL

It's not difficult, and it's amazing fun. We defy you not to bob about on your sofa when you're behind these virtual decks.

Little lines tell you when vocals are going to kick in. You start moving the crossfader and, we swear to God, you're doing it. And it sounds BETTER when you're doing it. You start mixing a call and response on two different tracks. You cock it up, but it still sounds mint. Then you start dropping little drum loops in. You're dancing so hard on the sofa you're wearing out the fabric.

Then the penny drops. Holy crap. This is all Dave Pearce does. And I've learned to jam it in 30 minutes. You can plug your PS2 into your stereo, and rock an ACTUAL party. If anyone asks, THIS is what Sony has done for videogames. Peace out. ✷

CVG OPINION

Sorry, I'm a DJ superstar now. The only time I give opinions is over the PA. Hang on, P Diddy's on the other line. He loves this game as well. **DJ**

WE LOVE
- Loser to superstar DJ in 30 minutes
- A stack of tasty club hits to spin
- Near limitless loops possibilities

WE HATE
- Can't move crossfader quickly enough
- It looks boring
- Real DJs

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...

DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NEW YORK

PUBLISHER
EA
DEVELOPER
EA
OUT
10 OCTOBER

x4

IN A NUTSHELL

The rap pack return for another ruckus, but this time Def Jam's ramped-up roster of hip-hop hard nuts are packing a chunky array of brutal new fighting styles that'll have you hollerin'. Nastier than ever. Mmm.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

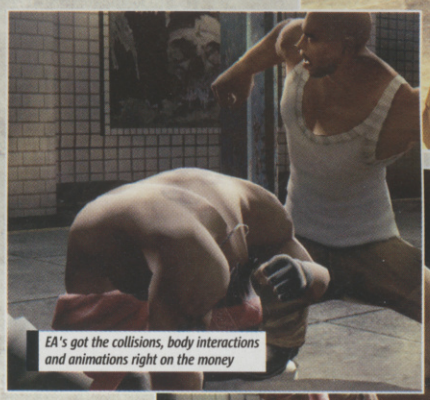
ALSO ON

XBOX, CUBE

WWW.EA.COM

The arena can be your best buddy or worst enemy, because they're stacked with potential makeshift weapons

The sound effects are sweet. Our favourite's the 'PONK!' when you belt someone with an iron bar

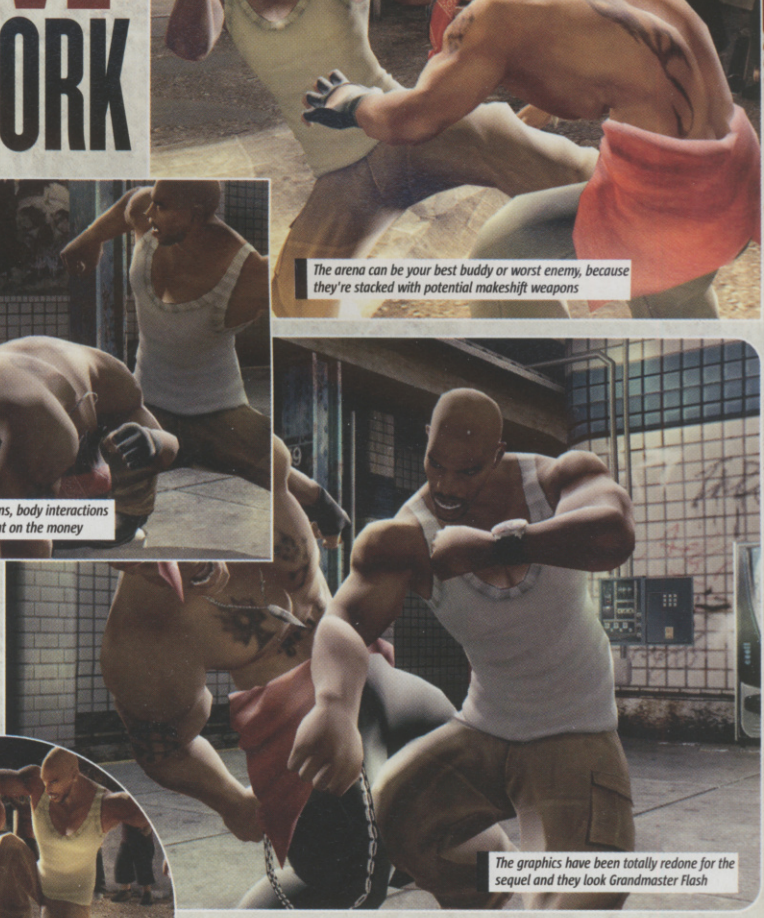


EA's got the collisions, body interactions and animations right on the money

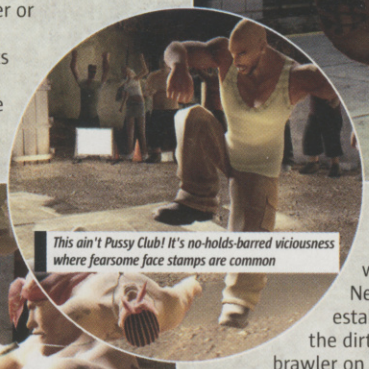
It's a slamming idea – all the baddest hip-hop artists battering the shiznit out of each other. Except in Def Jam Vendetta it was ALL about rasslin', limiting you to an array of pantomime WWE style attacks.

Sure, Boston-crabbing Funk Master Flex was wicked, but we were always busting to get rude on opponents with savage street-smart moves. And that's exactly what EA's slick-looking sequel is hitting us with. Yeah you can still grapple, but DJ: Fight For New York chucks in four extra styles and gives you the option to combine and customize up to three of theses disciplines with any one fighter. So say you want to get heavy with Busta Rhymes, you can be part kickboxer, part submission fighter and part martial arts master or street fighter!

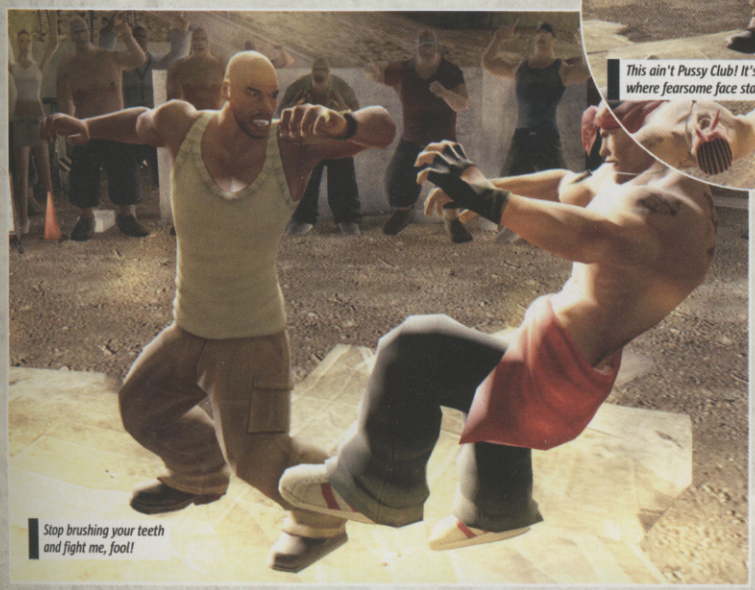
This gives you stacks more flexibility and makes clashes far more unpredictable and edgy. But that ain't the killer shot. This sukka makes you wince. See, Fight For New York is out to establish itself as the dirtiest brawler on the block, with the new attacks guaranteed to bring big pearly tears to your eyes.



The graphics have been totally redone for the sequel and they look Grandmaster Flash



This ain't Pussy Club! It's no-holds-barred viciousness where fearsome face stamps are common



Stop brushing your teeth and fight me, fool!

BLAZIN' SQUAD

The wrestling ring locations have been booted aside to make way for over 20 interactive urban arenas similar to those in Tekken and DOA. But it's the stuff that you can do with your surroundings that makes this nasty-ass sequel so brutal.

So you're in an underground car park cornered in by a fat Hummer, a tricked out Escalade and a crowd of pushy fight fans. A bunch of solid strikes and blood fountains later and Snoop Dogg's all psyched up and Blazin'. All 35 fighters enter this new hyped state when they're on a roll, and it enables them to pull off some awesome beeyatch-slapping moves.

Snoop grabs Ludacris' skinny ass and slams him into the side of the buffed Escalade, shattering the glass and denting the bodywork. He's just getting warmed up. As he staggers around, Snoop yanks him back, opens the door to the SUV and repeatedly slams his melon until it resembles a weeping purple raisin.

But when you're not narrowing heads, chucking enemies onto train tracks so they get squished by locomotives and using other pieces of scenery to do damage, you're using weapons like bats and metal poles. Fighting dirty isn't just an option here. It's the law.*

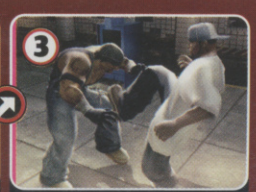
STREET SMARTS

Def Jam's line-up of slick hip-hop heavies is full-on massive, but you don't have to settle for the regulation flavours on offer. Not when you can make some muscle of your own.

Def Jam: Fight For New York is packing a new Create-a-Player option that lets you design your ultimate urban warrior. Trick them out with all the must-have accessories and stylings of any wannabe player. Blingin' ice jewellery, fat chains and some dope street heat with talent to match should make you the best dipped, most ghetto fabulous blood on the block. Probably.

Visit Jacob the Jeweller and sort yourself with some weighty sparkle to flash about

If you're gonna hold court you gotta have the tats. Ink your fighter with bitchin' designs



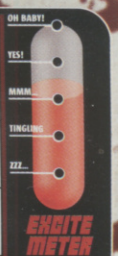
There are thousands of items of officially branded clothing like Phat Farm to unlock

CVG OPINION

Now looking richer than a set of diamond gnashers, and feeling meaner than a psycho gang-banger. Def Jam's gone nasty, and it's all gooood. **Mike**

WE LOVE
- Viscious new fighting styles
- Wickely interactive arenas
- Ramped-up visuals and animations

WE HATE
- You can't help wanting to fight with Eminem and Dr Dre
- Not deep enough for the hardcore?



TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2

* PUBLISHER
ACTIVISION
* DEVELOPER
NEVERSOFT
* OUT:
AUTUMN

IN A NUTSHELL

Two games in one, with Story Mode and Classic Mode. The customisation is ramped up with personalised graffiti tags, and so is the glamour with MTV's Bam Margera setting sick-ass challenges!

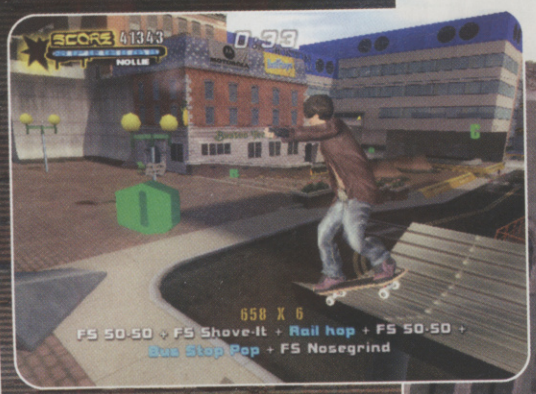
AVAILABLE ON

PS2

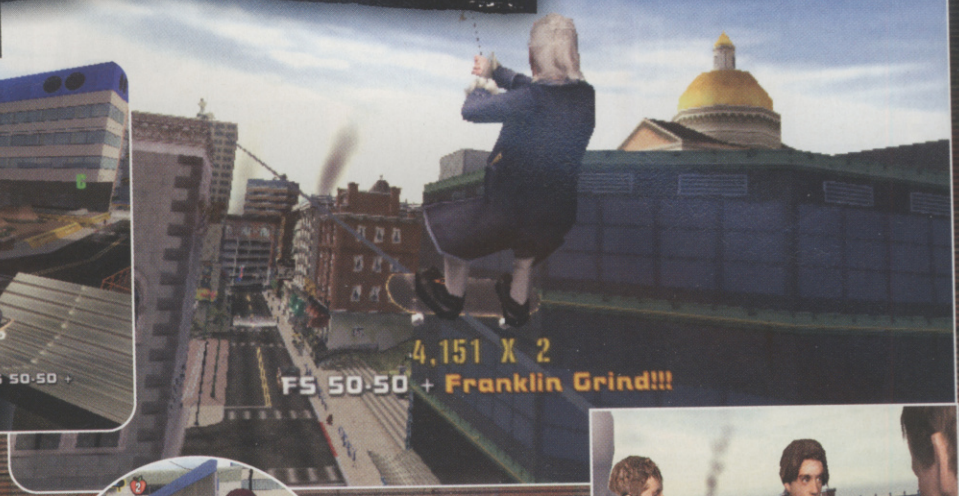
ALSO ON

XBOX, PC, CUBE, GBA

WWW.ACTIVISION.COM



There's a nice, comforting sense of closure as Classic mode brings on the letter collection



If all the secret characters are as cute as li'l Ben Franklin it'll be Christmas all year

Heck, this new Hawk's got game! In the words of the famous Birdman, THUG 2 is a "round-the-world party!" Or, if you prefer, a chance to rack up some points with some "balls to the wall skating," according to THUG 2's co-star, MTV's notorious Bam Margera.

That's right – although Bam features in previous Hawk's games he now has joint billing in Story Mode, aka World Destruction Tour, but more on that later. For those people who missed the goal-oriented styling of Pro Skater, S-K-A-T-E and Secret Tape are back to make up Classic Mode. The guys at Neversoft have worked their Band-Aided balls off to deliver the best ever Hawk's. And hand on heart, we must say they've come up trumps.

Every level has some sort of projectile to go with the Jackass style of humour

AROUND THE WORLD IN SKATEY WAYS

Story Mode is officially dubbed World Destruction Tour for THUG 2, in which Team Tony takes on Team Bam to compete for the most points. It is, as the name suggests, a round the world tour, raising hell in all the major cities. The first thing you'll notice in Story Mode is that you don't always skate using the same character. Instead it's essential to skate as team-mates (who replace the casual thrill-seeking bystanders) to unlock everything in the game.

After you've bumped into someone they not only list their goals but want to perform them with your help. There are over 20 guest skaters in THUG 2, some of them completely nuts. One of them is none other than Ben Franklin with his trademark Franklin Grind – complete with tiny Stars and Stripes kite!

MTV's Bam Margera briefs his team in typically offensive tones

Rack up as many points as possible in a couple of minutes in Classic mode

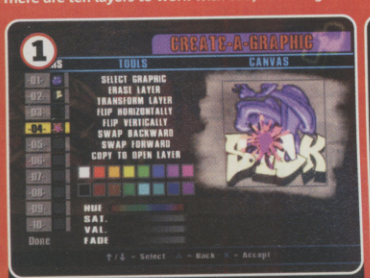
SOME TRULY SICK-ASS SET PIECES

Not all the objectives are spelled out for you on the World Destruction Tour – there's a whole bunch of random challenges to find as well. You're not completely in the dark, though. If there's something to do with an obstacle, say grind a bench, it glows when you get close by. A much more exciting example is to set your deck on fire by jumping over a barrel of burning oil, then quickly set fire to the fuses of cannons to demolish a construction site! In fact, before they go off, the guy standing next to them performs a comedy drum roll. Spin on a fire hydrant and you can open it up to

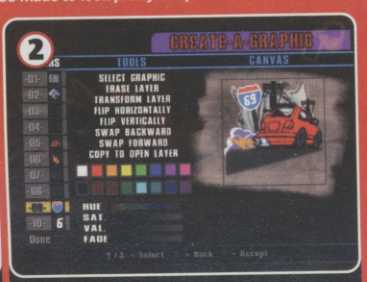
Objects flash when you're close by if it's possible to trick over or around them

BUT IS IT VANDALISM OR ART?

The Create-A-Graphic feature is very similar to PES3's team logo edit. Choose from pre-determined designs and fonts, then stretch, shrink or flip the image any way you want and change the colours to your taste. There are ten layers to work with too, so all tags can be made to look pretty unique.

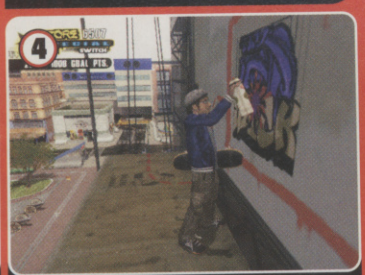


All the words you're ever likely to need, available in graffiti style to get you started



You can see how the layers can be stacked up to make some cool compositions

We're not so good with symbolism. Either this tag means something or it just sucks



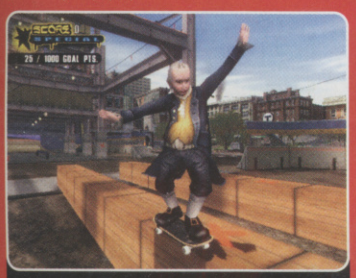
Go tag crazy! Keep your pals on community service busy for the rest of their lives!

"SCORES WILL GO THROUGH THE ROOF, ON PAST MARS AND EVENTUALLY TO PLUTO"

MORE THAN A FEELING

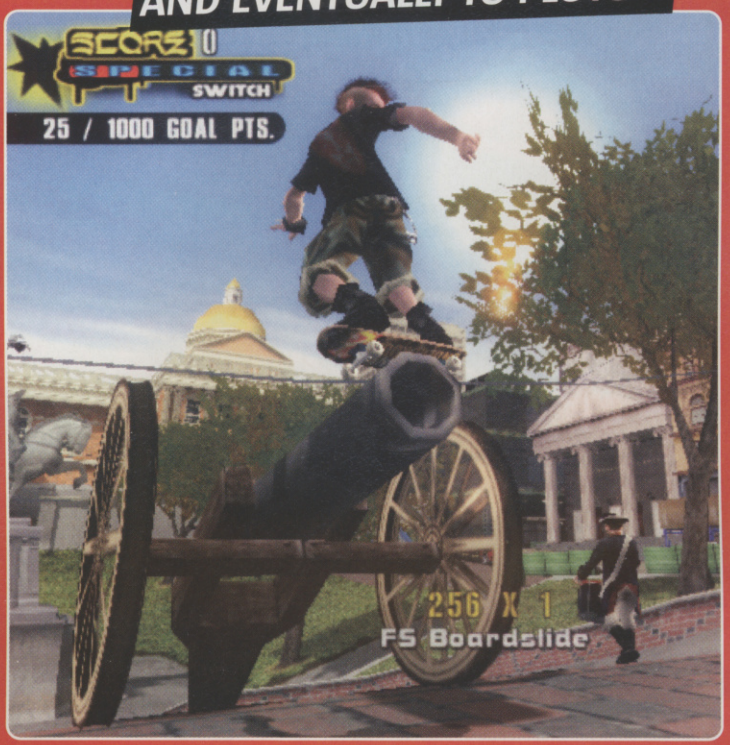
First stop on this World Destruction Tour is Boston, famous for its tea parties. The location gives you a taster of what to expect from the rest of Story Mode, with hidden objectives, scrotum-scrunching stunts, and a very special guest character to unlock.

Oh, and the chance to throw apples at passers-by. Yep, projectiles: New to THUG 2!



Find Ben Franklin and see if you can perform his Franklin Grind. Here's a clue: this ain't it!

Some elaborate stuntwork required on the way down, so why not use slo-mo Focus



Stunt over the cannons with a flaming deck to light their fuses and hear them boom

spray water everywhere. And there's stuff like this hidden all over the place.

PANINI IS A THING OF THE PAST

Customisation is HUGE in THUG 2, so you can really make your presence known. There is a new option to create your own graffiti tag to spray on almost any flat surface, and make stickers for your deck using Create-A-Graphic. Slap your tag above an ATM and cash comes flying out, so all kinds of secrets can be unlocked by painting the town.

On PS2, Face in the Game is now easier to use, plus all formats still get Create-A-Goal and Create-A-Park to keep you going for at least another year once you're through with everything Neversoft has in store.

If you want to be closer than close to perfection with your skating, THUG 2 has a ridiculous new thing called Slo-Mo Focus Control. This insane feature allows you to briefly enter a close-up, slow motion mode to help you perfect different trick lines, or make cleaner landings. Time your SMFCs just right and your scores will go through the roof, on past Mars and maybe eventually to Pluto.

In addition, there's something else new called the Freak Out meter, activated by hammering the triangle button just as you're about to fall down in the middle of a combo. Max out the Freak Out meter with your frenzied finger hammering and you'll enter a new type of combo worth even more points. So by this stage we're talking record scores of intergalactic proportions. Bonus! ✷

Neversoft wanted the vehicles to be much smaller in THUG 2 to enable more stunts

CVG OPINION

We've no doubt that THUG 2 will be the greatest Hawk's game ever to grace our fair planet – and then destroy it! Great graphics, great gameplay and great humour. **Paul**

WE LOVE
- Using new skaters
- Massively overblown dynamic levels
- Great sense of humour throughout

WE HATE
- Hawk's series still has no rival
- Neversoft doesn't make more games
- No Xbox Live or PC online. Rubbish!

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...

ROME TOTAL WAR

✷ PUBLISHER ACTIVISION
✷ DEVELOPER THE CREATIVE ASSEMBLY
✷ OUT: AUTUMN

PC CD ROM

x8

WWW.TOTALWAR.COM

Despite Rome looking every inch the ultimate RTS – the deepest but also the most spectacular and accessible yet – there are still no plans for console.

You may recognise Rome: Total War from the BBC2 TV series Time Commanders. In fact the BBC based its entire show on The Creative Assembly's game, due to its historically accurate representations of battles from the Roman era.

In addition to the Roman Empire, you can take charge of Macedonia, Germania, Armenia and Britannia among other major armies of the age. By adopting the role of famous historical commanders such as Hannibal, Boudicca and even Julius Caesar, you can recreate massive full-scale cinematic battles. RTW even considers those who can't be bothered with resource management, with an auto-manage feature allowing you to leave all this to the computer while you concentrate purely on battle tactics. ✷

Taunt enemy forces into moving too soon, playing them right into your hands

Zoom in to take a closer look at the battlefield to analyse individual victories

Leave resource management up to the CPU while you think of your next move

WE LOVE
- Scary elephants on your side
- Units unique to each culture
- Historical accuracy!

WE HATE
- You can't do Hadokens and stuff
- Not one secret car to unlock
- Can't summon fairies to help

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...

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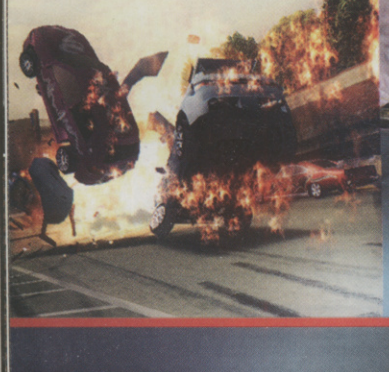

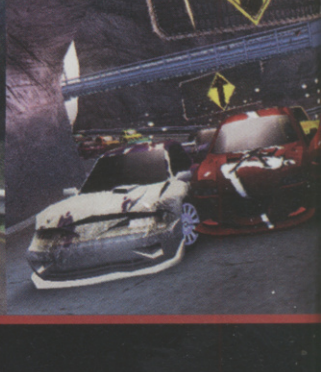

XBOX LIVE ONLINE ENABLED · ONLINE BROADBAND ONLY · PlayStation.2 · POWERED BY gamespy · CLIMAX · eidos

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SRS STREET RACING SYNDICATE

Strange neon barriers keep you on course. Just like in real life, then

- PUBLISHER: NAMCO
- DEVELOPER: EUTECHNYX
- OUT: TBA

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Need For Speed: Underground meets Midnight Club meets Juiced. Free-roaming neon-drenched street racing with a hint of gambling. Plus with a dash of scantily-clad babe-age thrown in for good measure.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

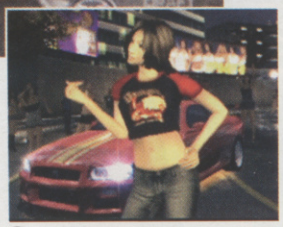
ALSO ON

XBOX, CUBE, PC

SRS.NAMCO.COM

Just like Vietnam is the new WWII, illegal street racing is the new, erm, legal track racing. Game shops are awash with neon-drenched, late-night racing games. So what makes SRS any different?

Firstly, the babes. While scantily-clad smashers come as standard with every street-racing game, SRS takes a different, and some might say more full-on tack with the laydeez. In SRS, the babes are up for grabs. Win a race and you might entice a hottie back to your rather sinister-sounding 'warehouse'.


Lose a race and you can lose your girl. There's loyalty for you

The gals aren't just eye candy. Some of them set you challenges

TRICK BABY

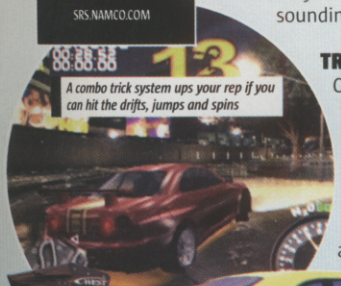
Calm down, it's just your loft-living pad where you hang with your fave babe. Eventually you curry favour with a crew of honeys all vying for your attention. Get them to start your races, take them driving with you – they love it. You can even bet one on a race instead of cash (nevermind Manhunt, we can see an 'objectification of women' outrage coming to The Guardian some time soon). Win and you'll get the other driver's lady to add to your harem, lose and you go home with a piece of stale pizza and the TV for company. Sexist? Hell, yeah. Fun? Mmm, it has its moments.

When you're not making moves, there's a few other things that makes SRS stand out from other street-racers. Sure, the neon's in, the nitrous is in, tricking your ride's in and free-roaming the city like in Midnight Club is in. But unlike the rest, there's a nice trick system. Points and combos rack up for skids, air and spins. All that adds to your rep, which helps you unlock new challenges later on.

TEENAGE KICKS

SRS seems to be content to be the most juvenile and in-your-face of the illegal street racers. But that's not necessarily a bad thing.

A loud, thumping soundtrack, a car decked out in questionable taste and a hottie on each arm, it could well be more fun than its more 'serious' rivals. ✶


A combo trick system ups your rep if you can hit the drifts, jumps and spins

Heavy traffic? Not on these late-night, rain-slick streets

You can lure more luverly laydeez to your warehouse harem

Skid marks? Cars handle sweetly, with easy skids and drifts

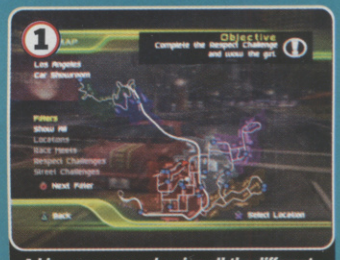
Under hottie's orders: your current girlfriend starts your races for you. Now get out my face and go get me a chilli-dog, ho

Trick your car out with the naffest vinyl this side of a Barbie store

GRAND RACE AUTO

Forget slow-motion, the latest craze among game makers is to copy ideas off Grand Theft Auto and import them into their games.

Like Spider-Man 2, SRS has definitely been playing RockStar's baby. So will all games soon focus on the following features?



A big messy map, showing all the different missions you can currently play

Plenty of random side-quests to distract. Flash your lights to race this bad boy

You'll hear the po-po co-ordinating their response on your scanner. You're a bad lad

CVG OPINION

NFSU2 is riding in the same, free-roaming direction. But the babes, the seriously stacked-out rides and trick system might just mark this out enough. **Simon**

WE LOVE
- Neon-slick graphics
- Free-roaming city approach
- Warehouse full of hot babes

WE HATE
- Blink and you'd swear this is NFS
- Could be too much of a mish-mash of styles

It's the first time flying combat has been included on the GBA version and we're here to tell you it rocks!

DRAGON BALL Z: SUPERSONIC WARRIORS

- PUBLISHER ATARI
- DEVELOPER BANDAI
- OUT: 27 AUGUST

GAME BOY ADVANCE

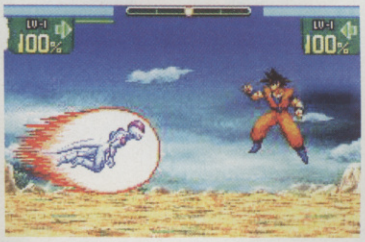
DBZGAMER.COM

It'd be easy for us to take the mick out of Dragon Ball Z. It's a cartoon, it's cheesier than CVG's games room after a four hour PES session, and it features lots of men fighting over their balls.

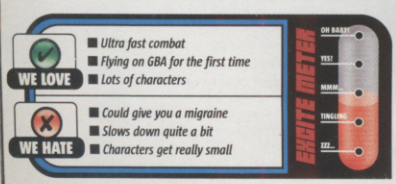
Easy, yeah, but not right. Every time we play them we can't help having fun, and this new GBA version is no exception. It's impressive how much Dragon Ball has been squeezed into one cart: there are thirteen characters to master and unlock, a story mode that's different for each, a training mode, and all the quick fight and link-up scrappage you could want.

The fighting itself is the best bit though. The GBA screen zooms and scrolls brilliantly to keep up with the high-flyin', hot-fireballin' action and there's so much going on it hurts your eyes. But in a good, Dragon Ball-kinda way. ✷

All the over-the-top moves you're used to have been stuffed into the GBA



Combat buzzes all over the screen like a fitting dragonfly, but there's a wee bit of slowdown



THAT'S A TRAP

One of the most fun bits of being an Evil Genius is designing some crazy-ass traps to scupper secret agents coming to put the cuffs on you.

You can link up hilariously complex systems with a simple point-place-and-connect system. It really couldn't be easier to hook up a gas chamber with a flame-thrower and then a piranha pit – they'd have to be one hell of a special agent to get out of that one alive. You can even improvise with household items like food processors. Don't hold back: the more elaborate and deadly your trap, the more your Infamy meter stacks up!

You can link up pressure pads and tripwires to a whole sequence of chained traps

The comedic animations of your victims makes their demise all the sweeter

You'll have to work out which traps work best for each secret agent. Mwah-ha-ha!

- PUBLISHER VIVENDI
- DEVELOPER ELIXIR STUDIOS
- OUT: OCTOBER

ONLINE GAMING

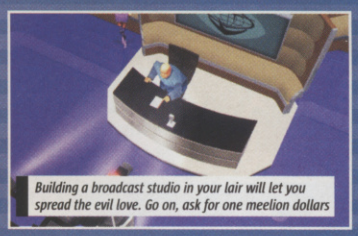
IN A NUTSHELL

Let your inner evil pour forth like a torrent of pineapple-flavoured puke by taking over THE WORLD! Mwa ha ha! Build bases, hire henchmen, and assassinate secret agents. Your mum would be proud.

AVAILABLE ON

PC CD ROM

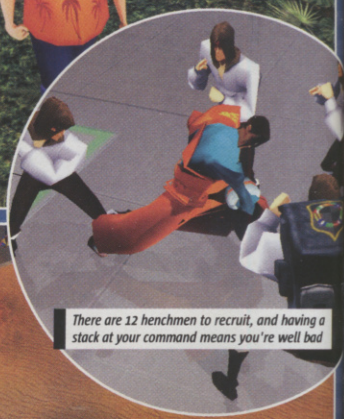
WWW.HOWEVILAREYOU.COM



Building a broadcast studio in your lair will let you spread the evil love. Go on, ask for one meelion dollars

EVIL GENIUS

Tourists are your cover – they like casinos, hotels and bars, but get a bit nosy if they're bored



There are 12 henchmen to recruit, and having a stack at your command means you're well bad

Henchmen kick serious ass but be careful – they're dangerously trigger happy!

Minions. Say it loud. Brilliant, isn't it? It just sounds evil. MINIONS! It's also French for 'small onions'.

That was a lie. Sorry, we've been playing Evil Genius and we can't stop doing bad stuff. Take our Minions – just a minute ago we jammed one into a food processor. Why? Because we're EVIL! This is not explained in Bond films, but being the bad guy RULES!.

In Evil Genius you start off with some gold and a couple of Minions, and you need to build a huge HQ on a tropical island and create a Doomsday weapon to take over the world. Just watch out for tourists wandering about your island – keep them happy or they'll stumble across your base. And the more they blow your cover, the more do-good secret agents are dispatched to investigate your megalomaniacal machinations.

Minions need some fun too! Kit our their rec room with consoles to keep them sweet

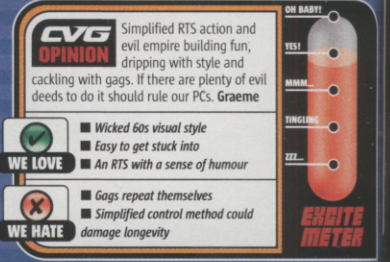
Military, Social and Science Minions help you build your dark dream – digging out bunkers, hoodwinking cash-laden holidaymakers, developing new technology and spying on your enemies. Getting the balance right is crucial, especially as sooner or later you'll get noticed by the authorities.

If you're really feeling the heat you can recruit Henchmen – double-hard secret agent swatters, but you'll need loads of Infamy to get them on your side (see box above).

It's a lot to think about, so managing it has been made straightforward with one-click controls. This makes it easy to get stuck in, although we're a little worried about its depth in the long-term. Maybe it'd work better on PS2 and Xbox...

But evil IS definitely fun, and when you hook it up with an inspired visual style that spoofs all your favourite spy films you could have the most dastardly enjoyable strategiser game ever. ✷

CVG OPINION Simplified RTS action and evil empire building fun, dripping with style and cackling with gags. If there are plenty of evil deeds to do it should rule our PCs. **Graeme**



KOF MAXIMUM IMPACT

* PUBLISHER
SNK PLAYMORE
* DEVELOPER
IGNITION ENTERTAINMENT
* OUT:
1ST HALF 2005

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

First 3D version of SNK Playmore's classic arcade fighting series. New characters join a cast of old, as you kick the funk out of everything that moves in new Story, Battle, Survival, Practice and Training modes.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

WWW.KOFMI.COM

Someone forgot to tell Kyo Kusanagi it's rude to point...

"3D, suits you sir." Bogard and Kyo prepare to beat the crap out of each other

Rush attack! Being in 3D you can now sidestep these sort of moves

Terry Bogard shows that you can't beat a good old-fashioned uppercut

When Street Fighter went 3D it slipped face first into a steaming pile of dog crap. It completely lost that feeling of unique precision combat, speed and excitement that the 2D versions offered. However, King Of Fighters' 3D debut promises to retain all the punch of its 2D cousins.

Although characters now get the benefit of sidestepping, rolling out of attacks and new moves, KOF: Maximum Impact still plays remarkably like its 2D forefathers. If you loved busting heads with Terry Bogard and Kyo Kusanagi before, chances are you'll be fiddling with your rude bits in anticipation over this one.

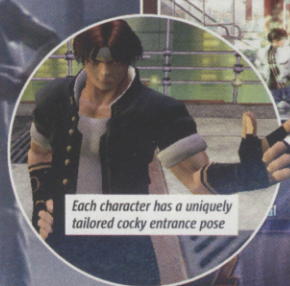
FISTS OF FURY

The fighting's crazy fun, with satisfying special effects exploding with every awesome hit that's landed. The characters are now bigger on screen, feel chunkier and move much smoother than the jerky 2D animations of old.

It's a bit like Tekken in terms of feel – fast action, fluid animations, awesome collisions and simply executed techniques.

"Where's Marco?" Even Jason from Big Brother makes a surprise entrance

"What you lookin' at, jerk-off?" The KOF mob attempt to stare us down...


Each character has a uniquely tailored cocky entrance pose

Series fave Kyo Kusanagi sets the game alight. Boom boom

The character select scene ain't changed much from the 2D coin-op originals

However, it lacks the depth of fighting expertise required to master the likes of Virtua Fighter 4 Evolution.

There are a few new characters alongside the familiar ugly mugs. The most standout brawler is tasty blonde chick Lien, whose entrance scene is an extreme close-up of her giant norks. Wicked stuff, except you'll only end up cursing the PS2's lack of a slow-mo button.

You'll also be chuffed to know there's a choice of five fighting modes too, including Story, Survival and three-on-three tag battles. The actual story's a bit weak, mind – typical guff about turf wars and a fighting tournament.

It's gonna have a tough time up against established 3D heavyweight brawlers like Soulcalibur 2 and VF4 Evo, which let you pull off stacks of complex combos and reversals. That said, KOF: Maximum Impact looks slick, feels solid and is bursting with attitude. Plus with over half a year of development time still in the pipeline, SNK Playmore's hard-hitter is worth keeping tabs on. ✷

ROLL WITH IT

The big change with KOF: Maximum Impact is in the movement. Lay a sweet strike on your opponent and you can follow up with a series of other high and low attacks. That means rolling away or sidestepping is dead important.

As soon as you hit the deck, you'll need to pull away with precision timing, otherwise you're quickly gonna be toast. Find yourself stomped on and it's hard to break free. You can even bounce off walls if you're clever.

1
Pull back to avoid second waves of attacks or you'll be seeing stars

2
The silver-haired Ryo wisely keeps his distance from Rock's special fire attack

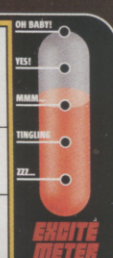
3
If you don't like rolling and getting dirty, blocking is a decent alternative

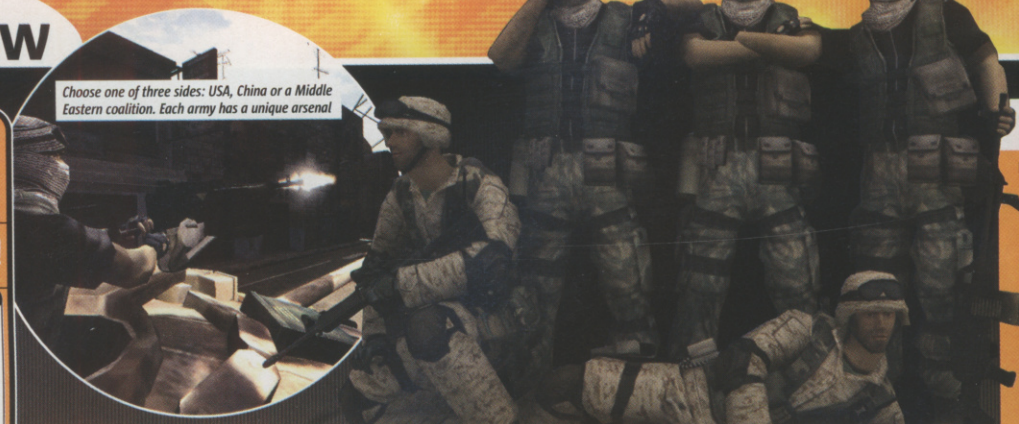
CVG OPINION

Looks smart in 3D and feels just as sharp as the 2D originals, though it lacks the depth of other 3D beat 'em ups like Virtua Fighter 4 Evolution. **Stephen**

WE LOVE
- Still plays like the 2D legends
- Sweet animation
- Some great new characters

WE HATE
- Not enough in-depth techniques
- Lost a smidge of its original charm





Choose one of three sides: USA, China or a Middle Eastern coalition. Each army has a unique arsenal

BATTLEFIELD 2

- PUBLISHER: EA
- DEVELOPER: DICE STUDIOS
- OUT: SPRING 2005
- ONLINE GAMING
- x100!

IN A NUTSHELL

EA begins a new chapter in the Battlefield saga with modern-day warfare. That means all the latest high-tech weapons, gear, vehicles and tank-loads of cutting edge gameplay features.

AVAILABLE ON

PC CD ROM

WWW.EA.COM

Better communication and a new squad system means that it's easier to set up and plan wicked ambushes

There's a much larger focus on urban warfare, which means far more claustrophobic, tense and edgy battles

A SKY FULL OF SCRAP

Dogfights in Battlefield 2 will be insane. The jets and helicopters are faster, packing greater firepower and cooler gadgets.

But most exciting is the new damage system. When you get a direct hit enemy craft will explode and split into pieces, creating chunks of burnt out debris that you'll need to dodge at high speed as you tear through the skies.

1

Getting too close to your enemy has its advantages and disadvantages when firing missiles - it's easier to nail them, but harder to dodge their killer debris

2

There's a new record function called Battlefield TV that enables you to save, replay and email clips of wicked in-game moments to your mates

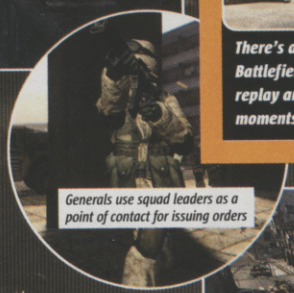
When we first heard that Battlefield 2 would feature 100-player online conflicts we were so intimidated that we curled a nutty one off in our combats.

That's because in previous Battlefields it was rare that everyone on a team of 32 worked closely together, and this lack of structure made you feel like a lone Rambo and an easy target. But in Battlefield 2 the emphasis has shifted. You're now urged to work in lots of tightly knit squads, controlled by a playable General, collectively working for the greater good and not gunning solo to win the war or selfishly slaughtering just to rack up a fat-assed kill count.

THERE'S NO 'I' IN TEAM

It's all about being a committed team player this time out. Each side can appoint a General who controls the action like it's a real-time top-down strategy game, firing out voice commands, setting specific goals and relaying key nuggets of information on-the-fly to the whole army, selected squads or individual players.

So when you're in the shit with rockets whistling past your ears you have much more of an idea of what tactics your side is using to win. Anyone can set up a squad and invite mates to join them. Voice commands can even be issued within a squad. The lines of communication in Battlefield 2 are brilliantly improved, which promises to give players a monumental sense of team satisfaction.



Generals use squad leaders as a point of contact for issuing orders

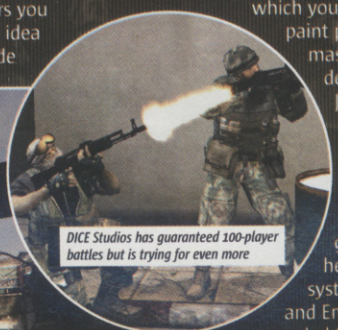
MAKE A TIT OF YOURSELF

You can even personalize your squads. Set up a clan and create your own clan tag, which you can bodge together in any paint program. Then slap your masterpiece (a wickedly self-designed logo or a photo of Jodie Marsh's tiddies, whatever) onto your squad's clothing.

Plus you don't have to be merciless with an M16 and an expert killer to gain experience points here. The new ranking system means that Medics and Engineers will also be rewarded for their brave efforts. Revive someone as a Medic using Defibrillator paddles (you know those electric shock thingies they use in ER) and you'll earn points. Likewise, play an Engineer and rebuild a bridge that's been blown up and it won't go unnoticed.

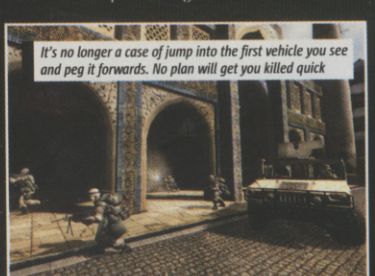
And let's face it, state-of-the-art weaponry like laser-guided air strikes is much cooler than going nuts with a Vietnam-era pea shooter and steaming into battle on a knackered moped. ✷

One of coolest features is the new variable map size system. If only 16 people are playing, the map will automatically shrink to suit that many players



DICE Studios has guaranteed 100-player battles but is trying for even more

Battlefield 2's new graphics engine is so powerful that it's reckoned it could even rival Half-Life 2's engine



It's no longer a case of jump into the first vehicle you see and peg it forwards. No plan will get you killed quick

CVG OPINION

With more focus on teamplay and tactics, Battlefield's newest recruit could promote the series to the rank of finest online war game for PC. **Mike**

WE LOVE

- Feel like a part of a bigger picture
- One of the coolest arsenals around
- New game engine is outstanding

WE HATE

- Makes you text-speak
- You'll need a super computer and a fast broadband connection

* PUBLISHER
SEGA
* DEVELOPER
SPORTS INTERACTIVE
* OUT:
AUTUMN

ONLINE GAMING

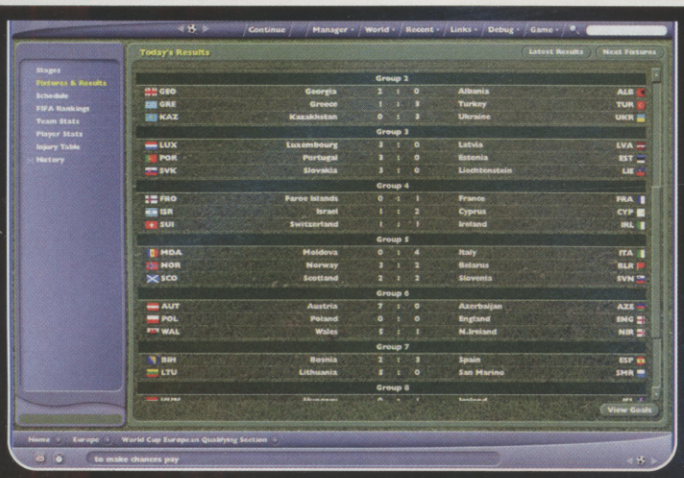
IN A NUTSHELL

Sports Interactive, the guys who invented Championship Manager, get back into the dugout with a new name. The winning line-up stays the same – more super-detailed and addictive footie management. Yes!

AVAILABLE ON

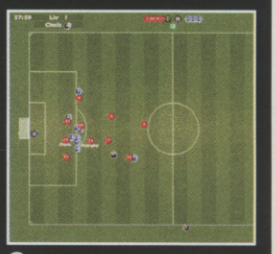
PC CD ROM

WWW.SPORTSINTERACTIVE.CO.UK



FOOTBALL MANAGER 2005

Simple little visual touches like the wee flags that represent each player and club's nation make FM 2005 much easier to use



There are more tactical options than ever to influence the match while it's in play. Total control!

Players will behave like their real-life personalities and will even do the tricks they prefer in games!

Sven, eh? How does he do it? He's a wee baldy Swede but he scores more often than Beckham from the penalty spot. We reckon underneath that dull exterior is an all-powerful processing machine, constantly calculating bird-seducing tactics.

A bit like Football Manager 2005. It doesn't look very exciting, but it's shaping up to be the most in-depth, involving and insanely addictive footie management experience ever. The difference is that FM, unlike Sven, is better at the football tactics.

With competition coming from Eidos' Champ Manager 5, Sports Interactive has been working FM hard in training. It's running 45 per cent faster than the last version (CM 03/04), and a new sidebar enables one-click navigation. Slider bars on the tactics screen, an enhanced player search function, improved scouting and transfer features and a brilliant new Team Report all make managing the increased wealth of information easier.

FM wants to make you feel more like a manager than ever before. The idea is to create a footie management RPG by giving you more of a personality – if you want to be a José Mourinho-style smart-arse you can talk trash about other players and managers. But remember: your words could come back to haunt you.

Out on the pitch the 2D match engine is more realistic and there's a great new split-screen option that lets you keep your peeps on the match and a bunch of stats at the same time.

We're hugely excited to see how this shapes up to Eidos' offering in the footie tactics derby day, but from what we've seen this should be the real champ. Maybe we should send Sven a copy.

Some of the licensed league players even have a picture on their stats sheet, but not Thierry

The look of the 2D match engine hasn't been finalised yet, but it looks a tiny bit better

The new split-screen match view is brilliant – watch the 2D match AND keep an eye on stats!

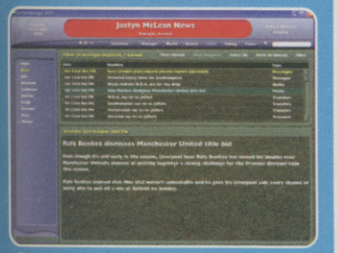
TRANSFER REPORT

Don't be confused – it's really simple. Football Manager is Championship Manager in everything but name.

It's developed by the same people – Sports Interactive, the guys who invented the series – and is an evolution of the same code used in last year's Championship Manager 03/04. Championship Manager 5 from Eidos, which we previewed last month and is also looking good, is a whole new project by a whole new team.

Both games are bringing new features off the bench to try and snatch the victory. Here's a couple of FM 2005's wonder-subs...

The Assistant Manager Report is a wicked way to get the instant lowdown on your team



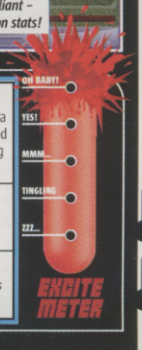
Agents will now send you video clips of players. Should you take a risk on a nobody?

CVG OPINION

Just as complex as we expected, but with an extra lick of Wayne Rooney speed and simplicity to make your footie tinkering more enjoyable than ever. **Graeme**

WE LOVE
- More in-depth than ever
- More accessible than ever
- More personal than ever

WE HATE
- Visuals still dull and functional
- Too stat-heavy for most footie fans
- Probably won't have UK licences



LEISURE SUIT LARRY
MAGNA CUM LAUDE

* PUBLISHER
VIVENDI UNIVERSAL GAMES
* DEVELOPER
HIGH VOLTAGE SOFTWARE
* OUT: OCTOBER 29

PS2 XBOX PC

ONLINE GAMING

WWW.VIVENDI-UNIVERSAL-INTERACTIVE.CO.UK/

Okay. We admit it. Maybe we do get a little bit laddish now and again, which probably alienates our female readers a bit. But even we, with all our rude words and blokeyness – even we were shocked when we played Magna Cum Laude.

Larry's games have always been engorged with adult material, but by crikey this one's raised the bar.

You actually play Larry's nephew. He's at college but he's scoring an F in the lessons of lady lovin', so turns to his spunky uncle for inspiration. You'll have to guide Larry around the campus solving puzzles and chatting up fit birds.

Conquests are, um, conquered by playing simple mini-games, but from what we've seen this is mostly about listening to the funny American Pie-style dialogue and watching Larry knock boots with big-tittied babes. Honestly. Look, don't get angry at us, we just preview this stuff.

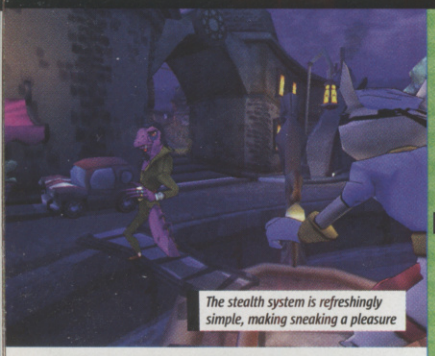
Chatting up girls is played out in this mini-game – move the sperm over the smileys to dip the wick

Start revising your American teen movies now so you can spot all the references

Frat parties, lectures, casual sex, velvet-clad pimps... Ah, American college life!

WE LOVE
- Dialogue that's actually funny...
- ...In a daft teen movie kind of way
- Big campus to explore

WE HATE
- Gameplay is just basic mini-games
- Overly simple puzzling
- Made us feel a bit dirty



The stealth system is refreshingly simple, making sneaking a pleasure

SLY 2
BAND OF THIEVES

* PUBLISHER
SONY
* DEVELOPER
SUCKER PUNCH
* OUT: DECEMBER

SUCKERPUNCH.COM

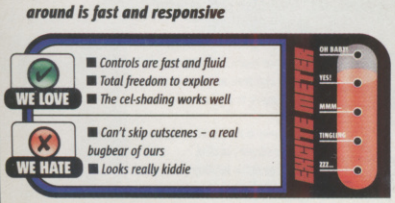
You would never admit to your mates that you liked it, but Sly Raccoon's cartoon snatch-a-thon was actually a damn good game. It was sort of a cross between Jak And Daxter's perky platforming and Metal Gear's stealthy sneaking – but, um, with a cel-shaded raccoon.

Bloody raccoons. They're always on the nick, and in Band Of Thieves the heists are bigger than ever. You'll need to rope in your sticky-fingered mates to orchestrate the smoothest snatches, and cool new moves like pickpocketing and stealth attacks will help you become the prince of thieves.

It still feels fast, fun and simple. Swift button presses bust out some pretty awesome acrobatic moves and the stealthy stuff looks quick and satisfying rather than slow and laborious. Best of all though, you're free to roam around the environment and approach heists in whatever way you choose. If this works well Sly 2 could well nick off with another hot review score. ✷

Hopefully you should be able to choose whether you want to be sneaky or kick arse

Sly's a right acrobatic little bugger. Jumping around is fast and responsive



The Sims 2

* PUBLISHER
EA
* DEVELOPER
MAXIS
* OUT:
SEPTEMBER 17

x4

IN A NUTSHELL

EA's master manipulator has evolved. Play a Sim from birth through to death, pass on DNA, create alien families! Do pretty much whatever the hell you want, then watch their histories unfold.

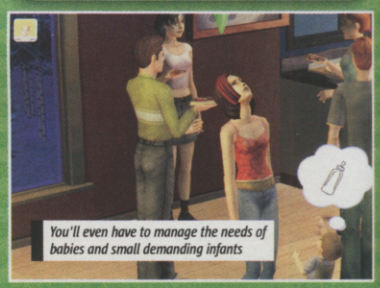
AVAILABLE ON

PC CD ROM

WWW.THESIMS2.COM

Every aspect of a Sim is customisable. You can even apply face paint

Sometimes Sims will need a bit of privacy before they let their emotional guard down



You'll even have to manage the needs of babies and small demanding infants

The hot tub remains one of the key spots for getting Sims in the mood for lurve

Being the fella who applies baby oil on all-girl porn movies, playing up front alongside Thierry Henry, inventing Pot Noodle flavours. We've all got dreams and aspirations, and the complex and comical characters in The Sims 2 are just like us.

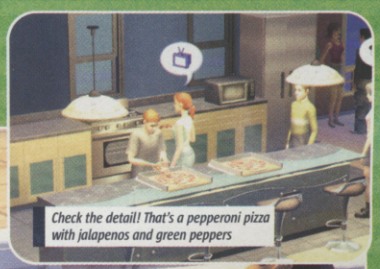
Every person you create will have three aspirations at any one time that they want to achieve in order to make them happier. These desires spin up like fruit machine icons along the bottom of the screen whenever something changes in their lives, and each want depends on the type of Sim you create and their current circumstances.

Sims play videogames on the TV, and we even witnessed one playing SSX3

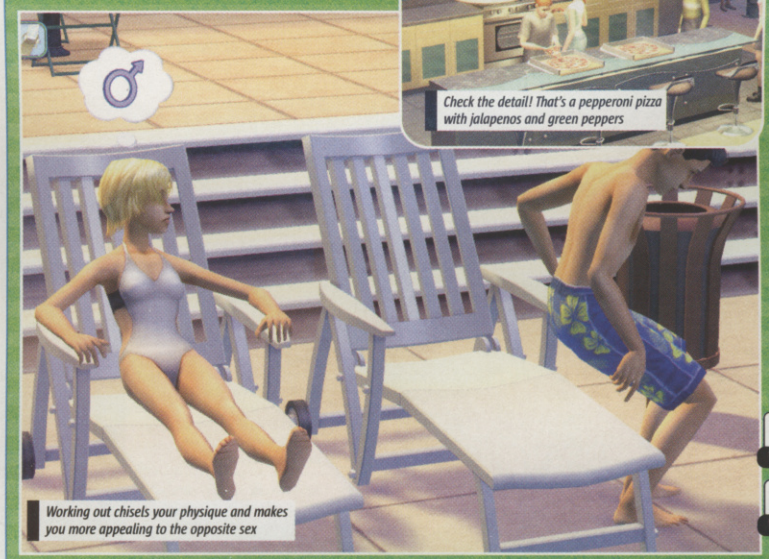
HEEEERE'S JOHNNY!

Take Johnny. His ultimate goal is to be popular as hell. He's at home and his fit friend Ophelia and some other mates have come over, but his annoying immature neighbour Tank also pays a visit. Tank spends his time swinging on the fridge door, acting like a nobhead and generally irritating people. So naturally a couple of Johnny's aspirations at this time are to beat the crap out of Tank and play tonsil tennis with Ophelia.

Johnny's been pumping iron so he's pretty tough. Time to win over the crowd and give Tank a pasting. A wicked cartoon puff of smoke erupts as their bodies flail and fight. Cha-ching! Johnny wins, fulfilling one of his aspirations. Then he tries it on with Ophelia, and she digs it. Another dream achieved.



Check the detail! That's a pepperoni pizza with jalapenos and green peppers



Working out chisels your physique and makes you more appealing to the opposite sex

Fulfilling a few aspirations sends your Sim's mood through the roof, to a new Platinum status, and this in turn leads to extra rewards. As your character hovers in the Platinum zone you can buy them aspirational items that can be dotted around your pad. One of Johnny's is the Love Tub – a perfect popularity item. After his recent successes he's able to buy it and invite Ophelia in for some of the sweet stuff.

Chasing your dreams in The Sims 2 is wicked fun, and we can't wait to give you our ultimate verdict in next month's powerhouse review. ✷

CVG OPINION

This Sim has got the lot. It's charming, funny, gorgeous, deep, sophisticated. Chances are you'll want to invite it into your home for a cuppa, a cuddle and maybe more. **Mike**

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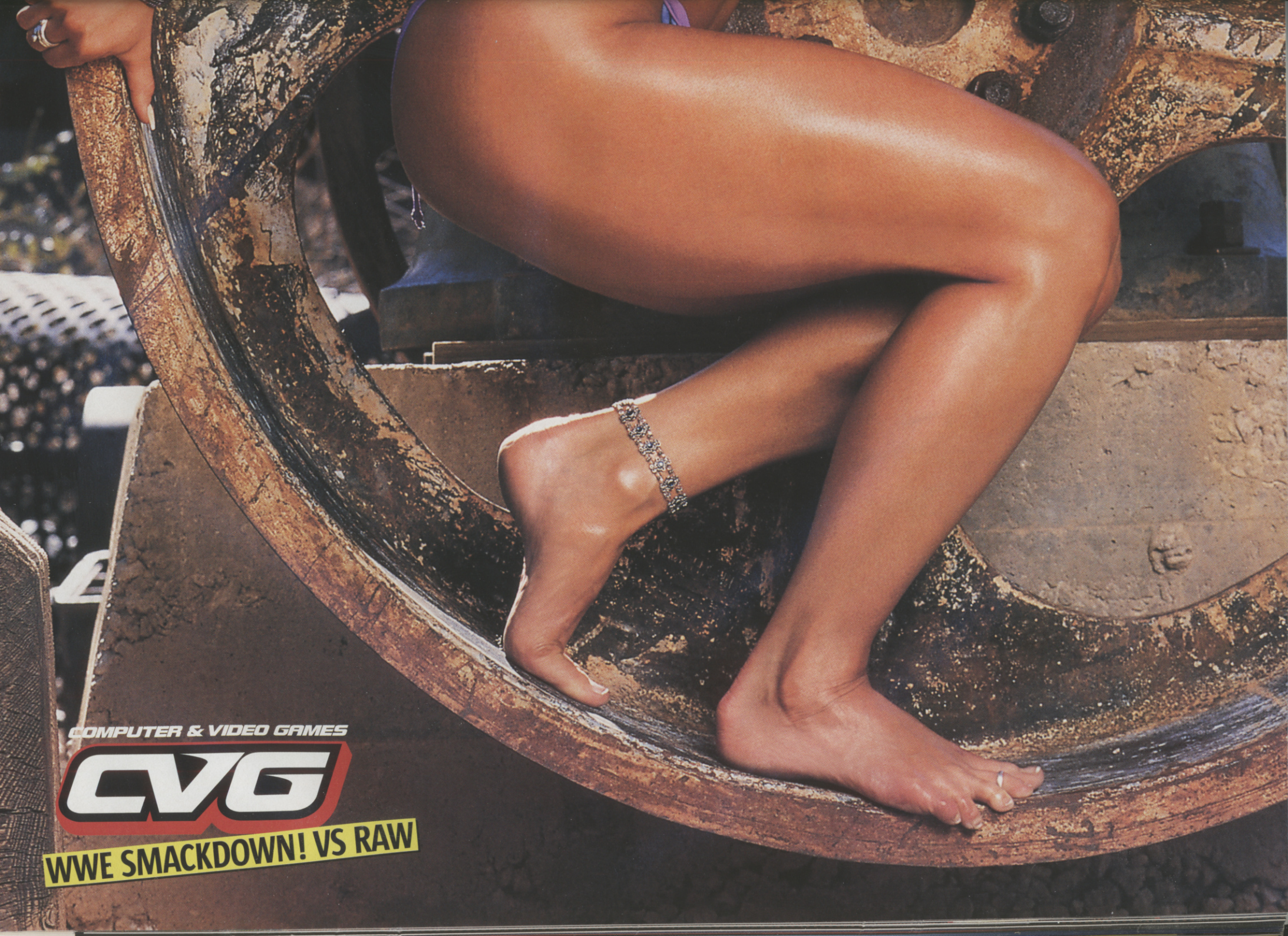
UNDERGROUND 2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WWE SMACKDOWN! VS RAW

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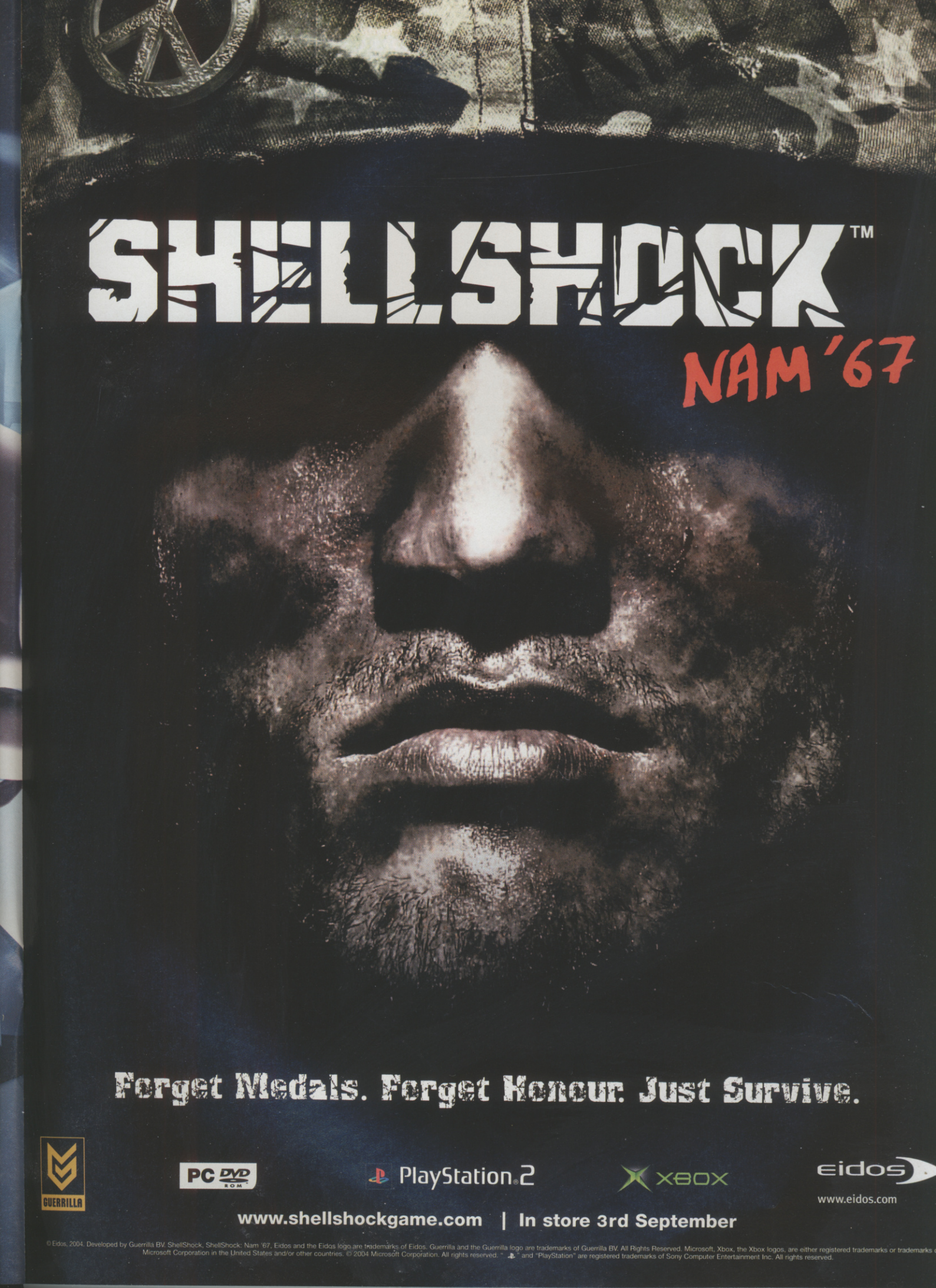

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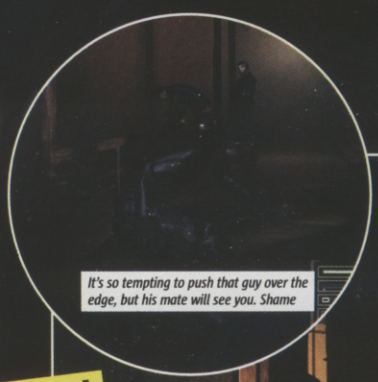
XBOX | PC CD ROM

RELEASE DATE	GAME INFO	CONTACT INFO
NOVEMBER	PLAYERS: 1-2 ONLINE: YES	PUB: UBISOFT DEV: UBISOFT MONTREAL

Tom Clancy's SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY

CVG infiltrates Ubisoft's heavily-guarded Montreal Studios to get the world's first in-depth play of Splinter Cell 3. This is what we found...



It's so tempting to push that guy over the edge, but his mate will see you. Shame

BE THE PUFF DADDY

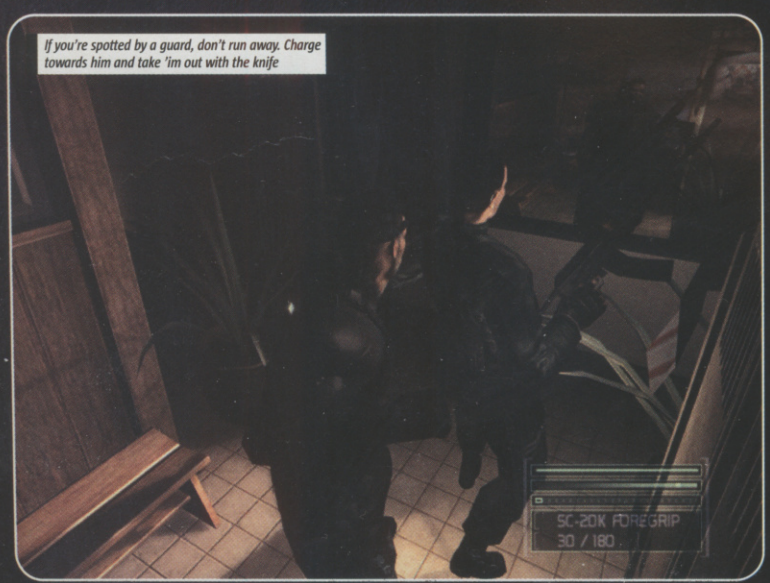
Sam's used to taking out lights with his pistol. Can't really do that to a candle, so blow it out instead

Ubisoft's Montreal studio looks like an ordinary terraced building from the outside – tall, narrow, and instantly forgettable. It's one of the world's largest development studios but you wouldn't know it, even if you were standing right outside. There are no telltale signs, no giveaway Ubisoft stickers. Nothing.

But inside it feels like a secret hi-tech installation, the kind Third Echelon covert op Sam Fisher is renowned for infiltrating in Splinter Cell. Take the ultra-tight security – there's no way unwanted guests could get in the lift, past the cameras and through the thick steel security door, even if they had Sam Fisher's knack of getting in places he's not supposed to be.

But luckily CVG has been invited, and even though we think about sneaking up behind the guard, grabbing him by the throat and pushing his face over the retinal scanner, we play it cool and he lets us pass. Bah.

Once inside, it's hard not to be impressed. The place is MASSIVE. We're talking five football pitch-sized floors, all rammed with serious-looking programming dudes slouched over ninja PCs. On one floor they're working on PSP and DS games, on another next-gen games are in development. But, try as we might, there's no way the Ubi guys are letting us at those babies. We're here to see one thing only – Splinter Cell Chaos Theory.



If you're spotted by a guard, don't run away. Charge towards him and take 'im out with the knife

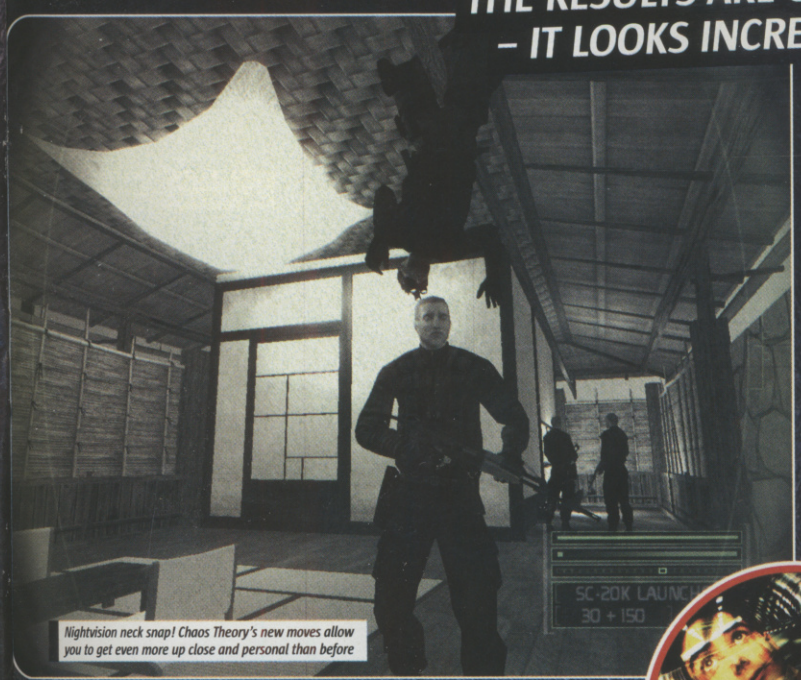
TWO TEAMS BETTER THAN ONE

Chaos Theory emerges from the shadows this November, just six months after Pandora Tomorrow hit PS2. But that doesn't mean it's a rush job. In fact it's anything but another yearly update. While Pandora Tomorrow was being developed in Shanghai and Annecy, the original Splinter Cell team – based in Montreal – started work on this sequel the minute the first game was finished. That extra year has

Darkness – much better! Now to take out the sucker who's going round, lighting all the candles again

Let's see if we can help you breath a bit easier... by cutting a brand new hole in your throat

"IT'S BEEN BUILT FROM SCRATCH. THE RESULTS ARE OBVIOUS – IT LOOKS INCREDIBLE"



Nightvision neck snap! Chaos Theory's new moves allow you to get even more up close and personal than before

meant that Chaos Theory is a much bigger leap forward next to Pandora Tomorrow, and is something Sam Fisher fans can really look forward to.

For starters, Chaos Theory has been built completely from scratch, rather than simply reusing the engine from the earlier games. The results are immediately obvious – it looks incredible. Fisher seems tougher, more world-worn. His face is filled with tension, his expression and posture changing to match the situation he's in, so much so he looks more alive than ever as he sidles through the shadows.

It's the environments Fisher must explore during each mission that are perhaps the most dramatic improvement. Pandora Tomorrow was pretty damn hot to look at, but it's a dog next to Chaos Theory. Like Doom 3 and Chronicles Of Riddick, it uses normal-mapping to create ultra-realistic locations. These are then brought to life by overlaying different visual effects over the top.

AMON TOBIN

Moody techno genius Amon Tobin is composing all-new tunes for Chaos Theory. That excites Alex a lot because he thinks he's brilliant.

HOT AND STEAMY

Take the new Bath House level for example – it's so hot and steamy inside the walls are coated in a thin sheen of water that shimmers as you sneak past. Nice. And in the lab, polished steel tables shine and reflect light realistically, the exact opposite of the rusty railings outside the lighthouse, which are dull and lifeless.

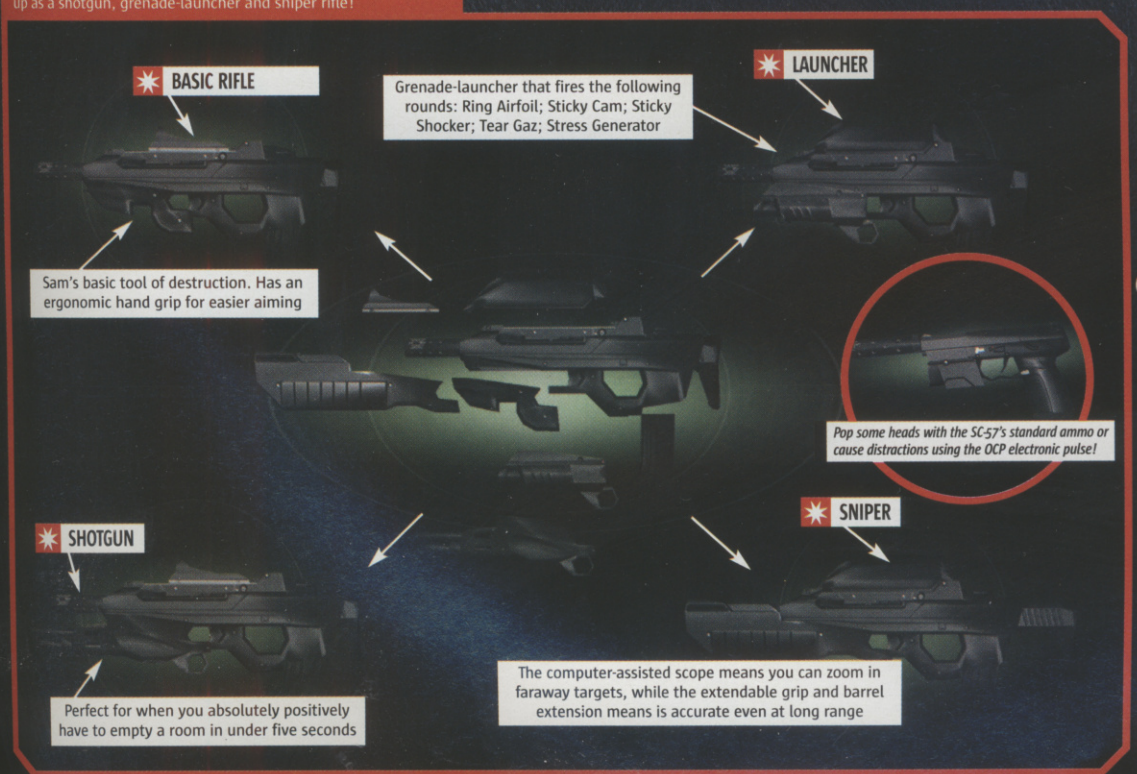
And when Sam's caught in a storm while sneaking around in the open air, the heavy rain forms puddles – which do more than just look pretty. Nearby guards will hear the splash of your footsteps if you're not careful where you walk and will come to investigate noise.

Luckily, you puddles can work to your advantage too – use them to spot the reflections of patrolling guards round corners. But beware – guards are a lot more intelligent this time round, and they spot YOUR reflection unless you stay concealed.

SAM'S BEST FRIENDS

The SC-57 pistol and SC-20K are Sam's two main weapons. Doesn't sound like many, but these hand-cannons are versatile.

The pistol also emits electronic pulses that temporarily disables light bulbs, TVs and the like, while the rifle also doubles up as a shotgun, grenade-launcher and sniper rifle!

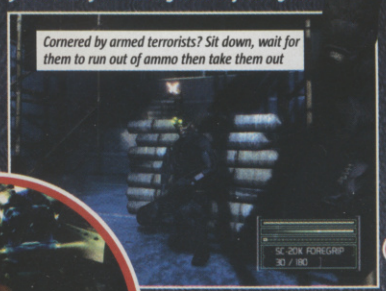


ONE-MAN KILLING MACHINE

For Chaos Theory, Sam has lost a few moves but has gained a whole load more. In the version we played he couldn't hold his breath while sniping and had forgotten how to whistle, instead distracting the guards by popping into view or – if you've got a Live headset hooked up to your Xbox – by whispering just loud enough so the enemy hears.

Now he can also hack computers remotely, tail enemies closer than ever before and pull off all these ultra-cool moves...

Sam's position is easily blown if a guard spots his shadow, so make sure you're always on the right side of the lights



Cornered by armed terrorists? Sit down, wait for them to run out of ammo then take them out

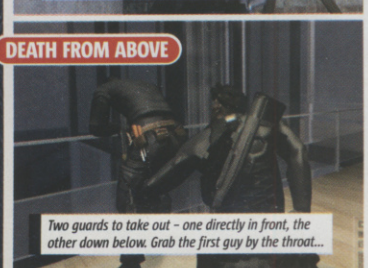
Don't bother knocking, kick in the door and take 'em by surprise!

BASH DOORS

OPEN UP

Can't get past areas fenced off with plastic sheeting? Cut through using Sam's knife...

DEATH FROM ABOVE



Two guards to take out – one directly in front, the other down below. Grab the first guy by the throat...

...drag him over to the ledge and chuck him down at the bloke below. STRIKE!

THROAT SLIT

Y'know how Sam used to knock enemies out using the butt of his pistol? Now he just cuts their throats

NECK SNAP

Shhh... Wait for him to walk below you then drop down from the pipe and break his neck with a sharp squeeze

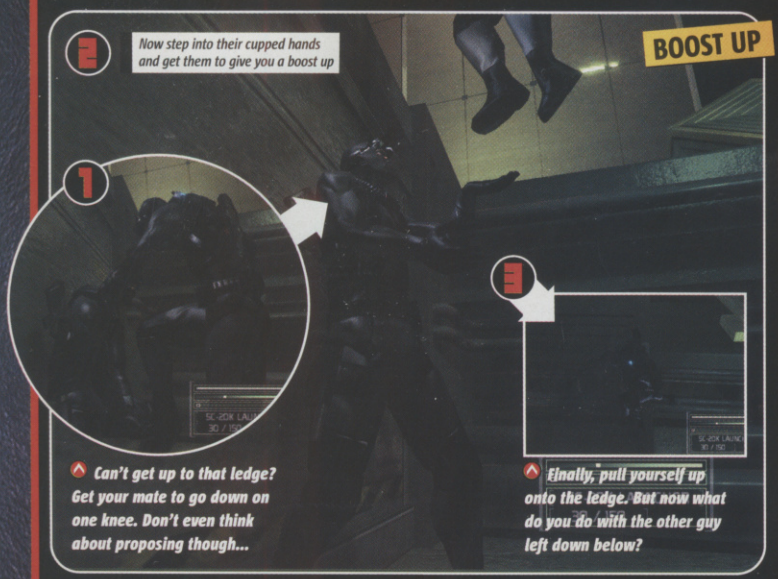
TWO SAMS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

The Spies Vs Mercs multiplayer game from Pandora Tomorrow has gone, replaced by a co-op game which Ubisoft describes as 'stealth squared'. CVG's played and it's true – it's like the one-player but with a mate. Awesome!

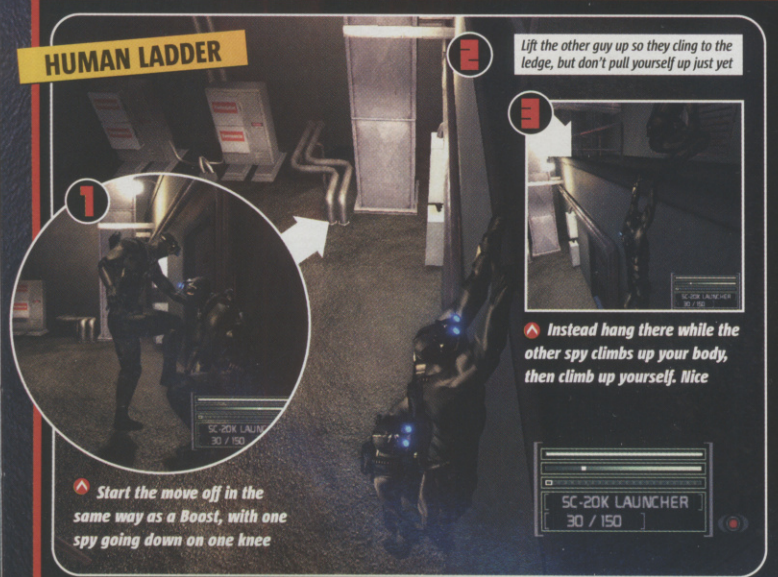
There'll be four multiplayer-exclusive maps to play through, either online or in split-screen. Taking roughly about an hour and a half each to finish if you know what you're doing, each is designed to make both players work together. There are loads of routes through each and therefore countless ways to complete objectives, but one thing is certain – both of you must survive to succeed. Luckily each spy carries an adrenalin shot that can be used to revive the other guy, but after both have been used you're on your own.

The Live headset is used to communicate with one another, which is essential when one guy acts as bait for the guards while the other hunts them down. But talk too loudly and the enemy will hear and turn their attentions of you! But it's the team moves that really make co-op Chaos Theory special. Take a look at these to see just how close you and your best mate have to get.

BOOST UP

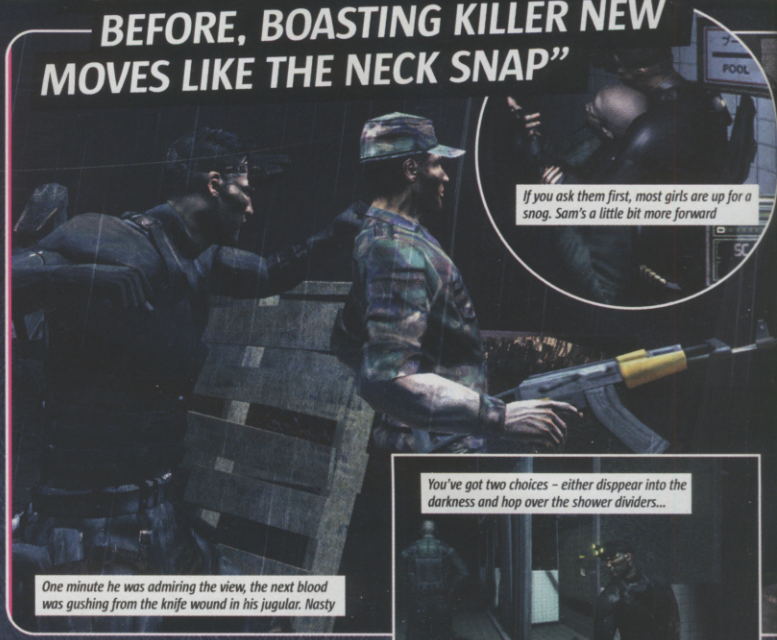


HUMAN LADDER



TEAM RAPPEL

"SAM IS A BIGGER BADASS THAN BEFORE, BOASTING KILLER NEW MOVES LIKE THE NECK SNAP"



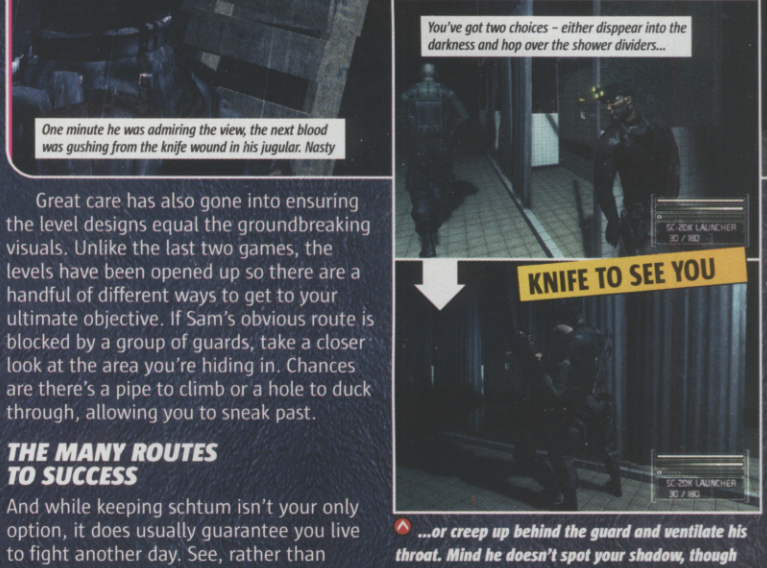
Great care has also gone into ensuring the level designs equal the groundbreaking visuals. Unlike the last two games, the levels have been opened up so there are a handful of different ways to get to your ultimate objective. If Sam's obvious route is blocked by a group of guards, take a closer look at the area you're hiding in. Chances are there's a pipe to climb or a hole to duck through, allowing you to sneak past.

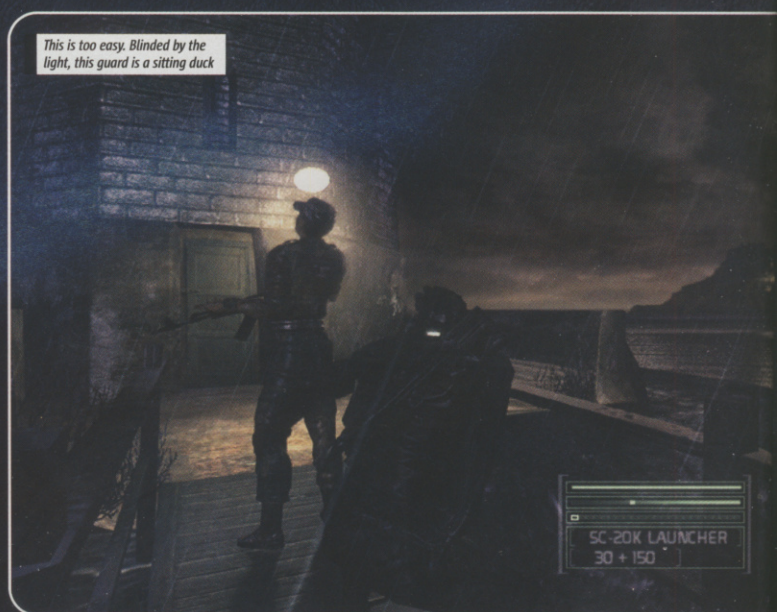
THE MANY ROUTES TO SUCCESS

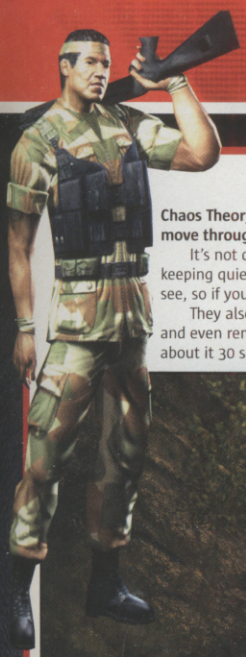
And while keeping schtum isn't your only option, it does usually guarantee you live to fight another day. See, rather than sneaking past, you could decide to take on the guards by creating a disturbance that grabs their attention so they come over to investigate. But unlike in PT, these guys aren't stupid, and once alerted they'll continue searching till the area is cleared.

They also hunt in teams, covering each other's backs and radioing updates to one another. So while it's easy to creep up behind a guard and slit his throat with Fisher's new knife, chances are you'll be picked up by his mate before you've even wiped the blood from your blade. And while it's certainly best to stay quiet, there will be instances where you're forced into a firefight too. Thankfully this doesn't mean you're automatically going home in a body bag, even though the enemy now uses cover more effectively and even attempts to outflank Sam.

Clever stuff, but if you're fast you can use it to your advantage. Wait for them to empty their ammo clips and duck behind cover to reload, then dart from your hiding space to a nearby pillar. They'll think you're still in your original hidey-hole, allowing you to edge out and cap 'em. Bosh!





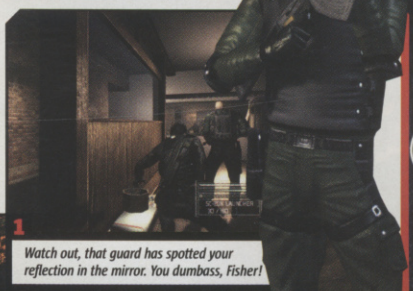


THE ENEMY ELITE

Chaos Theory introduces a new detection system that makes it even harder to move through the game unnoticed.

It's not only clinging to the darkness that ensures your survival, but also keeping quiet. Yup, enemy guards now have perfect hearing as well as 20-20 vision, see, so if you land heavily they hear the thud.

They also hunt in packs, use cover to prevent Sam sneaking up behind them and even remember your face. Knock off one of their mates and they won't forget about it 30 seconds later – they'll come looking for your ass.



1 *Watch out, that guard has spotted your reflection in the mirror. You dumbass, Fisher!*

2 *Now he's gonna keep looking till he finds you, and hiding in the shadows is not gonna keep him off your tail for long*

3 *Any guards who aren't equipped with night-vision goggles use flares to light up the area. Without darkness, Sam no longer has such an advantage*

SILENT MOVIE

Why you're behind enemy lines and killing these guys is, as yet, classified. But what you have to know is that while Chaos Theory stays faithful to Splinter Cell, it takes stealth games to the next level. Sam is a bigger badass than before, boasting killer new moves like the lethal neck snap and knife lunge.

We're promised the story'll be even more absorbing too, and will be told as you play through the game rather than via clunky cutscenes that constantly interrupt play. The plot unfolds while you're sneaking through a mission, whether it's when you overhear guards talking or through Chaos Theory's many 'memorable moments'.These fully interactive scenes play out at key parts of the game, shedding light on exactly why Sam has been dragged into this political war.

SUPERMODEL SPY

Chaos theory is a stunner to behold. Okay, we'd rather gawp at fit women but when we can't find any, this'll do.

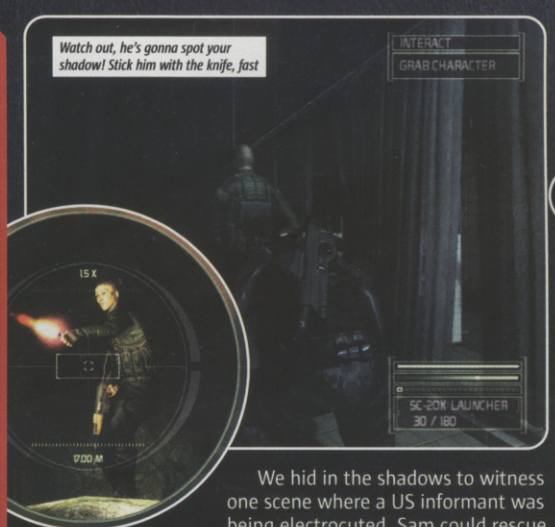
It's sharper, more detailed and ultra-realistic compared to Pandora Tomorrow, especially on the PC version. The weather effects are gorgeous, like when the rain cascades down on the lighthouse level. Don't believe us? Check out the screens below and eat it!

1 *This is what the lighthouse level would have looked like in Pandora Tomorrow. Pretty good, but wait a minute...*

2 *Check out the class water effects! Light reflects on the rain-sodden steps, and you can even see it spattering on the old, rusty cannon. Mint!*

1 *How clean is that floor?! They must mop the bloody thing every half an hour to come up with a shine like that!*

2 *Look how much Sam has changed since the first Splinter Cell! Thank god we're not playing around with that wet fart, huh?*



Switch the SC20K to snipe this dude from afar. Just don't expect to hold your breath for a steadier aim – it's not in Chaos Theory

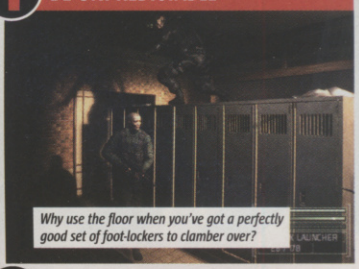
We hid in the shadows to witness one scene where a US informant was being electrocuted. Sam could rescue the snoop by shooting his interrogator, but that would surely blow his cover and therefore the overall mission. Is one man's life worth sacrificing if it means saving thousands of others? Should Third Echelon's finest sit back and watch an innocent man die?

That's your decision, and you've only got a split-second to make it. Get it wrong and it could be more than just one man's life on the line. Can you handle the pressure? ✷

STAYING ALIVE

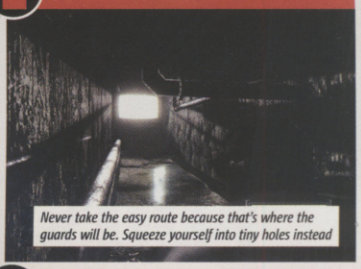
CVG'S FIVE SIMPLE STEPS TO STAYING STEALTHY

1 BE UNPREDICTABLE



Why use the floor when you've got a perfectly good set of foot-lockers to clamber over?

2 STAY OUT OF SIGHT

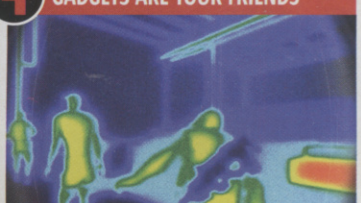


Never take the easy route because that's where the guards will be. Squeeze yourself into tiny holes instead

3 USE YOUR SURROUNDINGS

Stick to the shadows, stay out of the light and use smoke and steam to conceal your movements

4 GADGETS ARE YOUR FRIENDS



Can't see? Then switch to night- or thermal vision. Most guards aren't tooled up with this, so you have the edge

5 IF ALL ELSE FAILS, SHOOT!

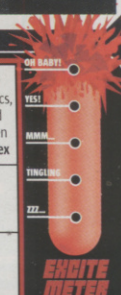
After all, you'll only get so far by keep your mouth shut!

CVG OPINION

It's early but Chaos Theory blew me away. The graphics, stealth system and refined gameplay are familiar, but Ubisoft has taken it to the next level. Can't wait for more! **Alex**

WE LOVE
- Looks FANTASTIC
- Sam's new moves and weapons
- New 'interactive' story-telling

WE HATE
- Are we getting Fisher overload?
- 'Forgetting' PT abilities
- Talking about normal-mapping



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PICK OF THE BEST SO FAR

Want to grab a brand spanking new Sony PSP? Well, you're gonna have to fight us for it by designing the best game we've never played. Impress us and you could be the envy of all your mates by owning the most powerful handheld ever created.

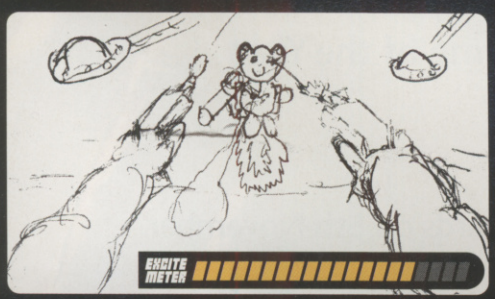
We've been swimming through the piles of entries that have already flooded in, laughing our asses off at your ideas and still dreaming up a way so that we get to keep the prize for ourselves. But our big boss won't let that happen, so if you haven't entered yet, what are you waiting for? All you need is an idea and the price of a stamp and a PSP could be yours – bargain! Entries to the address below.

Gimmie a PSP! CVG,
9 Dallington St, London, EC1V 0BQ

PANDA REBELLION
© EDWARD JACKSON

A WWII first-person shooter only you're not fighting the Nazis – this time it's pandas! You see, pandas have been hiding on the moon and are now invading earth in their UFOs.

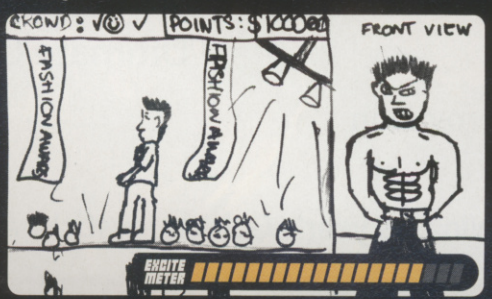
As Gary Reaver, it's your job to assemble a squad to stop the pandas. It may sound stupid, but this is a classy shooter with the panda army boasting impressive AI and evasive skills thanks to their jetpacks. There's also a cool bonus as once you've completed it you swap roles and become the pandas.



ZOOLANDER: DEREK'S WORLD
© RAYMOND BEADON

As Derek Zoolander you must use your catwalk skills to get major deals with top designer names. Live the life of a model, drive flash cars, travel to auditions, buy a plush mansion, design clothes and then get ready to catwalk.

Use the analog stick to perform amazing turns on the stage. Slow down your stride and breakdance. Press Triangle to Wave or blow a kiss and hold Circle to perform Magnum or another equally stunning facial moves.



SEAGULL STRIKE
© ASHLEY QUINN

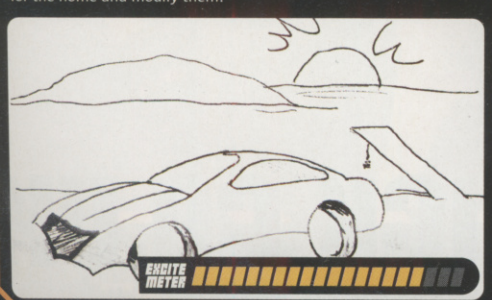
You are a seagull fighting for seagull kind. The idea of the game is to anger your target by splatting them with your poop. The Messometer determines how much more mess you can drop out – when your mess runs out it's game over.

Hazards to avoid are objects thrown at you by angry victims, including celebrities and other famous hate figures like Osama Bin Laden. There's over 20 levels, different birds to unlock and splat with and commands such as flap wings, swoop and poop.

ED FLAMINO'S FLAMING LIFESTYLE
© SARAH-JAYNE WARNES

Ed lives on a private island that's an interactive paradise. In his home there's a games room for snooker, pinball and arcade games.

There's a gym, pool and garage. Ed also owns a seaplane, jet-ski, rowing boat, moped and a sports car – he can race them all around the island. If Ed goes to the gym he can get fit and then perform extreme sports like base-jumping, para-gliding and skateboarding. If he wins races he can use the money to buy more vehicles and items for the home and modify them.



PIMP
© IMRAN BEPARI

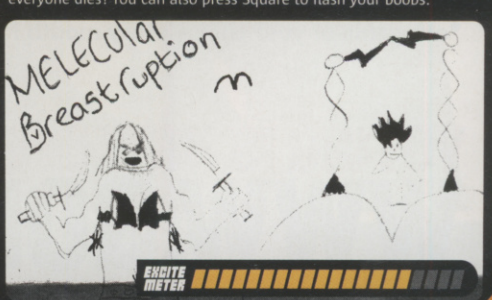
You're a wannabe pimp with little dough and two ho's.

The aim is to become the head pimp, make dough, pimp your ride, buy better bling, control high class ho's and master your magic stick and guns. Make mo' money by selling photos to the press and framing celebrities after they've used your services. You can also slap up your ho's if you want to. Multiplayer includes fights for the red light spots in the city and the soundtrack features G-Unit, 50 Cent and Snoop Dogg.

MOLECULAR BREASTRUPTION
© DANIEL SALMON

You are a failed supermodel who is about to make a breakthrough when a mad scientist sends out a molecular pulse to enlarge breasts.

The model feels it is her duty to take out the scientist to help her regain career, but if her breasts get too large they will pop and then it's game over. If you fail in the mission, the scientist will put the Breastruption into reverse and turn you into a man. With no women, everyone dies! You can also press Square to flash your boobs.



READ THIS FIRST!

Don't just spout some crap about saving Princess Fannypad from the Dark Lord Nutbuttah. Think about what kind of game would be perfect for PSP.

Extra points will be awarded for ideas especially suited to portable gaming and for concepts so fresh they taste like peppermint, as well as anything that sounds completely mental and makes us laugh. Just please keep in mind the following points:

1. **MASSIVE SCREEN:** How can you use PSP's big-ass display in cool ways? Maybe a game about something really long, like an oil tanker.
2. **WIRELESS MULTIPLAYER:** PSP's in-built Wi-Fi means multiplayer gaming is going to be big on Sony's handheld – exploit it!
3. **ANALOG STICK:** Think about how your game will make the most of PSP's controls – this is the first ever hand-held to have an analog stick

Once again, send your earth-shattering game ideas to: Gimmie a PSP, CVG, 9 Dallington Street, London, EC1V 0BQ

GAME NAME

AS LONG AS YOU LIKE

SCREENSHOT

DRAW YOUR PIC HERE

ACTUAL SIZE

CVG WIN A PSP COMPETITION ENTRY FORM

GAME IDEA

NO MORE THAN 200 WORDS PLEASE!

★TRIANGLE:

★CIRCLE:

★SQUARE:

★X:

YOUR DETAILS

★HELLO, MY NAME IS:

★MY ADDRESS IS:

★DAYTIME TELEPHONE NO:

★EVENING TELEPHONE NO:

★EMAIL:

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Official PlayStation 2 Magazine

"We have a triple-A certified hit on our hands..."
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REVIEWS

FULLY INDEPENDENT & MULTIFORMAT ✶ TRUST NO-ONE ELSE

Second Sight
We've been banging on about Free Radical's psychic stunner for months. Now it's time to zap you with the first mind-melting verdict

Sudeki
Continents have divided quicker than it's taken Microsoft's Japanese-style RPG to reach completion. Worth the wait? Find out now!

Conflict: Vietnam
Recently we've been cluster-bombed with 'Nam games. So can the classic Conflict series make a mark, or will it blend into the jungle scenery?

DING DONG MERRILY ON HIGH

It's four months till Santa unloads his hefty sack all over our living room carpets, but Christmas doesn't just last one day in the world of games. It's a four-month marathon of festive fun, stretching from September to December when all the biggest games of the year come shooting down the chimney. Doom 3 has finally erupted from the bowels of developer id, and we give it the deepest and darkest probing over the next four pages. Then there are surprise award-winners like NBA Ballers and Juiced. Plus we've got stacks of other crackers under the CVG microscope.

Mike Cooper

Mike Cooper *Reviews Editor*

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NBA BALLERS ..... 80 (PS2, XBOX, GC)
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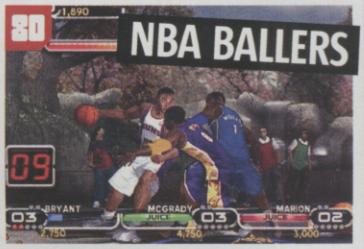
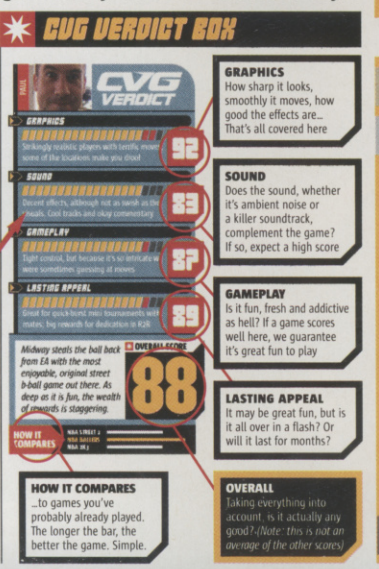


HOW CVG'S REVIEWS WORK

CVG's reviews are the most accurate, informative and downright honest you'll ever read. Here's why...

CVG VERDICT BOX



CVG SCORES

By popular demand, CVG uses percentage scores to bring you the most precisely calculated reviews ever!

95+ DIAMOND Award

90-94+ GOLD Award

85-89+ SILVER Award

75-84+ You'd be pleased to get this as a gift, though next month you'll probably forget you own it.

65-74+ Some fun to be had but one best bought by your mate so you can get a lend of it.

55-64+ A pretty average game that's unlikely to set the gaming world on fire on any level.

41-54+ You really shouldn't even consider renting one of these, let alone buying one.

UNDER 40 STINKER Award

THE CVG AWARDS SYSTEM

We score everything out of 100, to give you the most accurate reviews ever. And if a game is exceptional, we'll give it an Award. So you know what a diamond game it is...

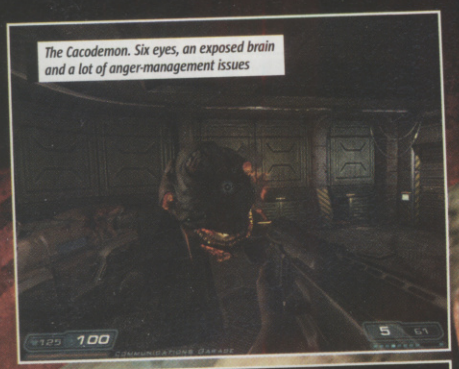
DIAMOND Award
The most coveted award a game can get. It's worth buying the console just to play it!

GOLD Award
A bloody amazing game you've got to own. It's brilliant in almost every respect, so go get it!

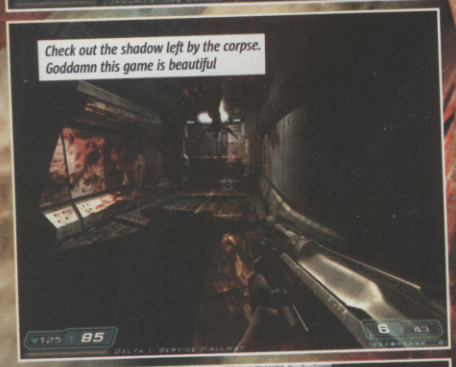
SILVER Award
Highly recommended by CVG's experts. May not be anything ground-breaking but it's still ace.

STINKER Award
More abominable than a reality TV show, set in a barbers, called "I'm a Yeti..."

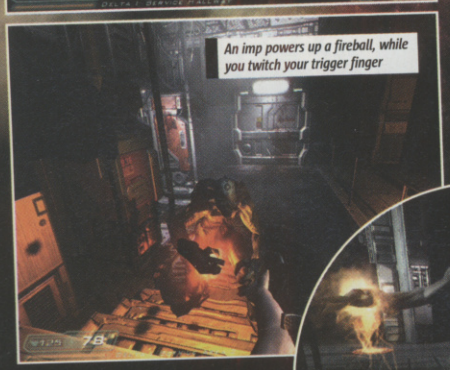
RELEASE DATE	GAME INFO	CONTACT INFO	ONLINE GAMING
NOW	COST: £44.99 PLAYERS: 1-4	PUB: ACTIVISION DEV: ID SOFTWARE WWW.IDSOFTWARE.COM CONTACT: 01753 756100	1-4, BUT EXPECT MODDERS TO TAKE IT TO 1-8 WITHIN WEEKS OF RELEASE



The Cacodemon. Six eyes, an exposed brain and a lot of anger-management issues



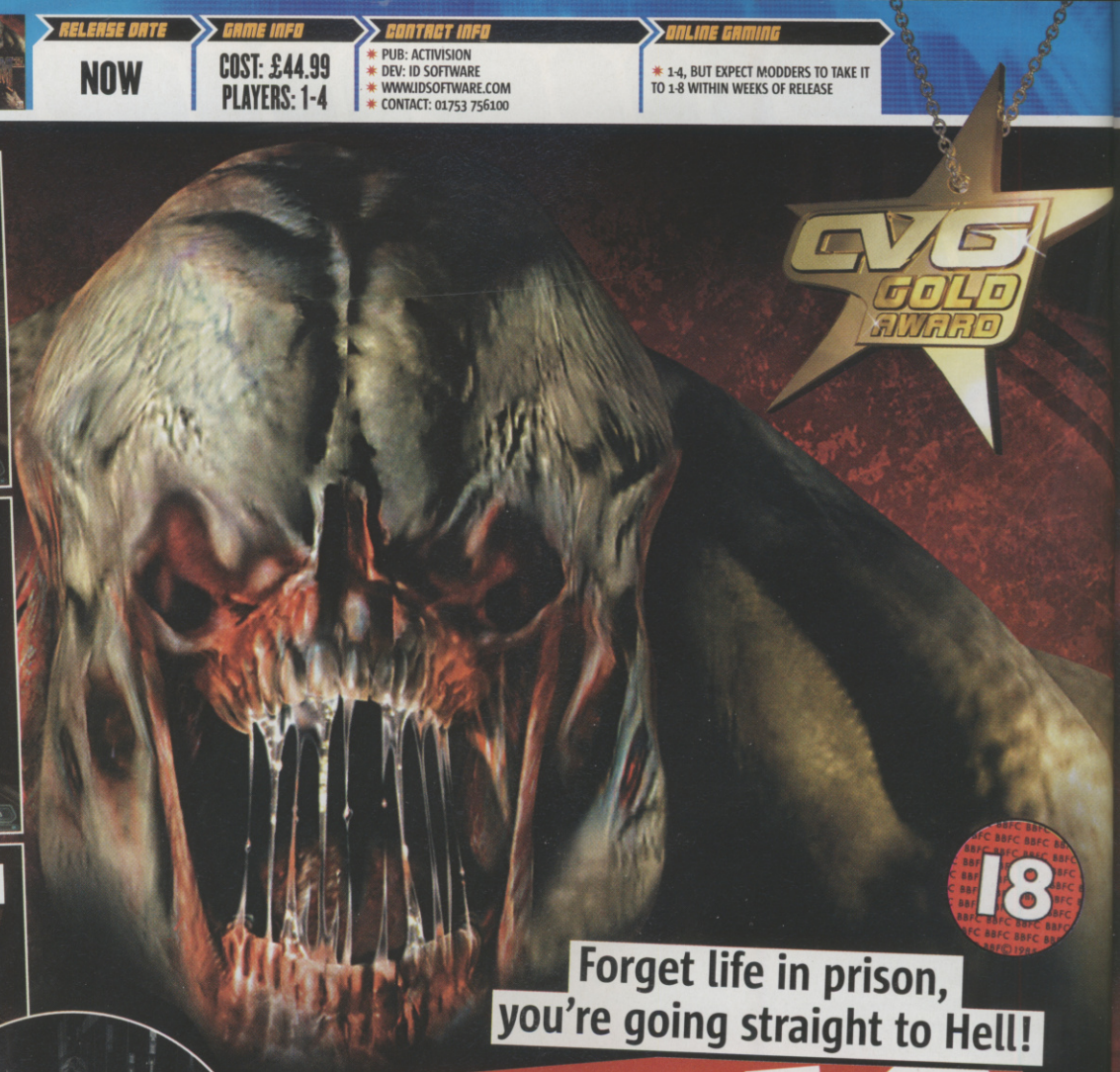
Check out the shadow left by the corpse. Goddamn this game is beautiful



An imp powers up a fireball, while you twitch your trigger finger

The ArchVile resurrects monsters and has a devastating flame attack. Duck!

Doom 3's firefights have to be seen to be believed. They are officially GREAT



CVG GOLD AWARD

18

Forget life in prison, you're going straight to Hell!

DOOM 3

Without Doom there would be no Halo. Without Doom there would be no TimeSplitters, GoldenEye, Far Cry or Killzone. Without Doom it's doubtful that there'd even be an Army Men: Sarge's War.

It's quite simply the shooter that created the blueprint for every single occasion that you've ever picked up a shotgun, rocket-launcher or pistol and shot something evil in the face.

And now, last seen exploring the depths of pixillated Hell in 1995, it's back and it's going to push your mind and your machine further into the abyss than you ever thought possible.

WELCOME TO HELL

Doom 3 is the charming story of a far-future corporation that's settled on Mars to pursue a brand of science that even those pharmaceutical companies who poke kittens' eyes with sticks and make monkeys chain-smoke unfiltered ciggies would be ashamed of. Doctor Betruga, a half-blind lab-coated man of thorough evil, is mixing his research into teleportation with a slight dabble in the arcane arts – and he's only gone and unleashed the forces of Satan into the bowels of his shadowy research complex. Tsk!

So it is that you, a new recruit on the Mars base find yourself trudging around your first day of work – only instead of asking where the toilet is and how to

■ Doom 3's hell is brilliantly constructed – with belching flame, walls that fragment and turn into bridges as you approach

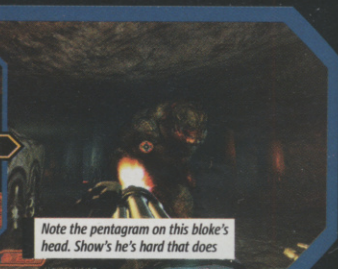
HELL IN A HAND-BASKET

'em and the biggest bad guys we've seen in a while. Not to mention stunning swirling skies and ornate carvings on the wall.

"Ambient. Love the skull motifs you've scattered around the place, daahling"

Everyone you meet just wants to lengthen your stay in Hell

Leaping from platform to platform is a chore, but shooting skulls out of the sky – we like



Note the pentagram on this bloke's head. Show's he's hard that does

■ Sometimes Doom 3 will throw you onto the Red Planet's (not very) atmospheric surface and you'll have to scurry around searching for oxygen cannisters and a way back into the base to survive – hampered by Satan's minions, or course.

A MARS A DAY

The Mars-scape reminds us of the best bits of Total Recall – when Arnie's eyes are just about to pop.

Monorails: integral parts of Alton Towers, Disneyworld and, now, outposts of Hell

Stay out here much longer and your lungs are going to be turned inside out

Squaring off against a Cacodemon who, being dead already, doesn't need much oxygen

Ack, turtle-s head alert. This room couldn't get any scarier if it was full of lava. Oh

"IT'S FIVE TIMES MORE LIKELY TO MAKE YOU SHIT A BRICK THAN ANY OTHER SHOOTER IN THE PAST FEW YEARS"

The Cacodemon's plasma attack provides for some spectacular special effects

operate the fax machine you're sent to search for a missing scientist, before watching the gates of hell open wide.

Flying skulls and lost souls fill the air, leaping and diving in and out of computer monitors. The ground shakes, the lights flicker one last time before plunging you into darkness. A deep-throated cackling floats around you in delicious surround sound and your journey into the depths of Hell begins.

Before I tell you how bleedin' great this game is I need to explain a few things, namely just how incredible it looks, sounds and feels. This is without a shadow of a doubt the most polished game that has EVER been released on the PC (and when I stick the word 'ever' into capitals I mean it. I'd underline it in red and scribble all over in fluorescent highlighter if I could). Anyway, you get the point.

MUTUAL MASTICATION

Revenants are shimmering skeletons with rocket-launchers on their shoulders. They don't like you very much and that gets mutual real quick.

Doom 3 is the product of the most respected shooter creators of all time, and they've piled five years of work into creating something that is beyond cutting-edge in terms of visuals, sound, animation and downright shit-scariness.

The genius of this game, though, is that instead of standing on your hard-drive and waving a big flag that says "Jesus Fookin' Christ! Look at me! I'm a technological masterpiece!," it won't try to drag your attention to a certain visual effect, a nice use of physics or the mannerisms of a certain monster. Instead, it weaves everything together to create an atmosphere that never reminds you that you're playing a computer game. In this way, it's five times more likely to make you shit a brick than any other shooter in the past few years.

A monster trying to lick you like an enthusiastic puppy. And trying to rip your face off as well

Like What Dreams May Come. Only with monsters and without Robin Williams

A few up close 'n' personal shots with the machine-gun never hurts. Unless you're this guy

HOW SCARY EXACTLY?

The first worrying problem that Lucifer's recently-extended playground presents is the fact that all your previous workmates have become zombies intent on feasting on your guts.

First off, you're armed with a paltry pistol, and later a shotgun and machine-gun. You're creeping through the shadows of the facility with your commander »

FOUR LEGGED FRIEND

Every now and then you'll be helped out by a gun-toting dog-robot whose animation honestly defies belief.

Hang back from the action and he'll worriedly turn his head, stay behind and he'll saunter back looking for all the world like a Labrador whose ball you've just thrown into a skip. It's just a shame that he has to die so often. Ho-hum, nevermind.

1

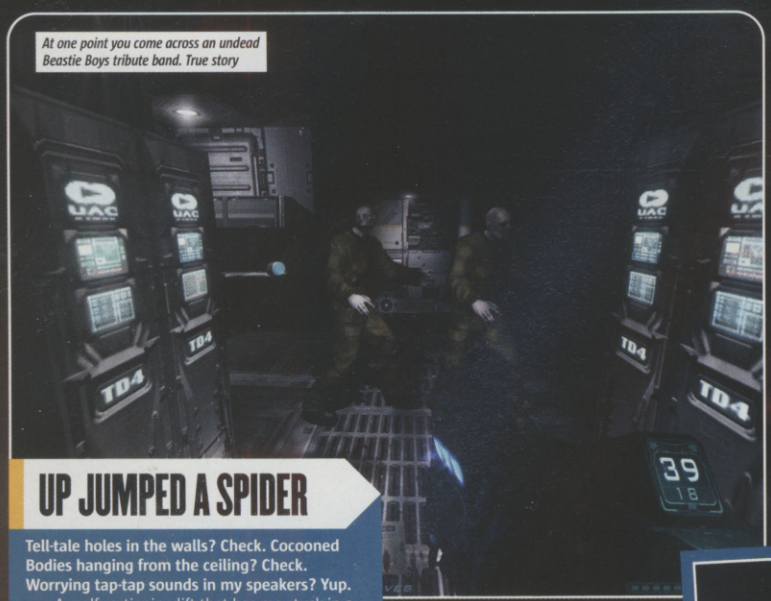
■ Here he is. He's sleeping right now, isn't he sweet? Dreaming about robot cats I'll bet...

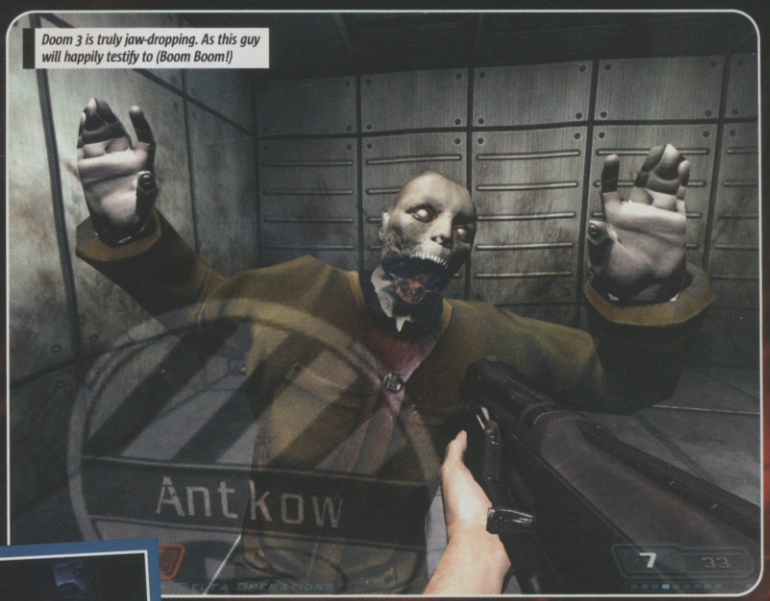
2

■ Look! He's like a robot Lassie! Only he's not hairy, not dead and not from the 1950s! Great!

3

■ Kill them robo-dog! Make them dead! Make them all dead! Good boy. Now go off and lick your nuts. And bolts

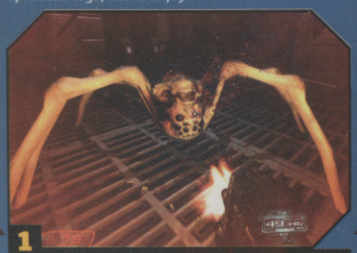

At one point you come across an undead Beastie Boys tribute band. True story


Doom 3 is truly jaw-dropping. As this guy will happily testify to (Boom Boom!)

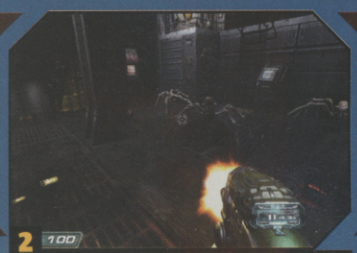
UP JUMPED A SPIDER

Tell-tale holes in the walls? Check. Cocooned Bodies hanging from the ceiling? Check. Worrying tap-tap sounds in my speakers? Yup.

A malfunctioning lift that has me stuck in a worryingly enclosed space? Yes indeedy. Well then, better prepare yourself for a bowel-busting battle against countless human heads that have sprouted legs, then. Enjoy!


1

■ Arachnophobic? You will be. And upside-down-head-a-phobic as well. Anyone remember The Thing... ?


2

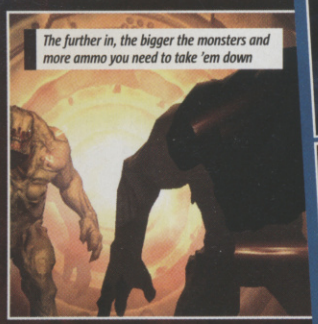
■ Look out for cracks in the walls, they're sure signs of impending ankle-bitage. Or cottaging zombie glory holes

3

■ Leave me alone! I love Satan! I swear! And that leg-pulling-off thing when I was four was a misunderstanding

4

■ "Hi there. I'm the spider queen. I hear you've killed all my children. Is this true?"


The further in, the bigger the monsters and more ammo you need to take 'em down

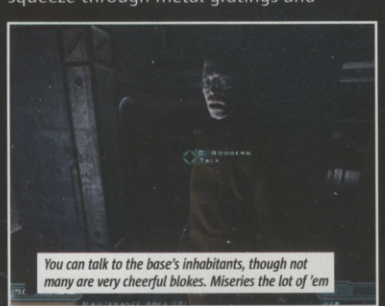
whispering in your ear and the undead lurching out of the shadows and gargling black ooze while you blast their knee-caps.

Scripted like all the best horror films, you'll instinctively know when something turd-waking is coming up. But you'll rarely be able to guess what angle it's going to come from: a fireball-hurling imp may leap through the crack of a door while you're opening it, a Hell-Knight could jump through a metallic set of stairs or a Pinkie Demon-dog's face might suddenly be spotlighted in the darkness a few feet from where you're hiding.

To help with this brilliantly stage-managed adrenaline-pumpage is the worrying fact that the game won't let you hold your torch and gun at the same time – either you see the terrors ahead and are powerless, or you wave your chaingun menacingly but don't have a clue where to aim it. It sounds like it could be annoying, but it isn't – it's a stroke of hellish genius.

As you work your way down into the depths of the base, Hell slowly gets more and more merged with the grimy sci-fi jails, reactors, sick-bays and monorails that you battle through. Bloody pink tentacles squeeze through metal gratings and decomposing corpses sway from the ceiling – pinned through the legs with black thorny spikes. Ulp!

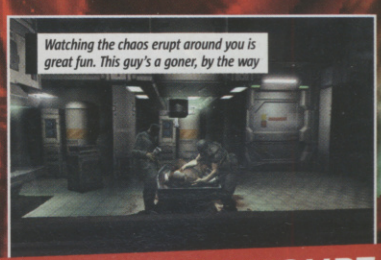
It aint pretty, and as the situation gets grimmer the monsters get more powerful and your array of weaponry gets even more mighty. There are upturned heads with spider legs that skitter towards you out of holes in the wall (not to mention their spider-queen mother who'll cause you no end of problems), and giant Cacodemons who belch flame in your direction. But stars of the show have to be the Cherubs.


You can talk to the base's inhabitants, though not many are very cheerful blokes. Miseries the lot of 'em

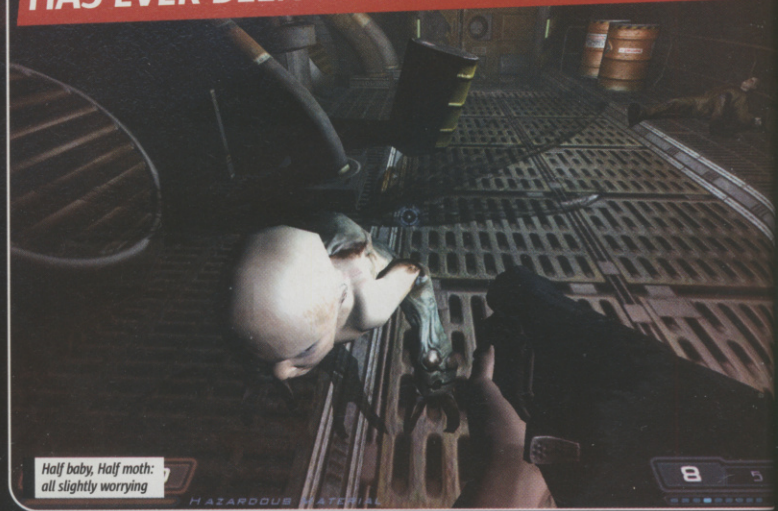
THERE'S A BUT

Essentially a sure sign that someone, somewhere has either a deep-set psychological problem or a worrying drug habit, these little beauties are half moth and half baby – fluttering around the floor like turd-hunting flies before sniffing you out and launching themselves straight at your face. I won't even start on the ArchVile – I'd spend all day rambling about his arms-raised flame attack – but you get the picture. These are the greatest monsters imaginable – and they eat the souls of Far Cry's Trigens and Halo's Revenant combined.

The thing is though, that Doom 3 may be way ahead of the curve in terms of scares, technology and beasties, but it's also a game that's decidedly old-fashioned. We've recently come to expect stuff from our shooters like vehicles, sniping, stealth, nifty AI, alternate firing modes and a dash


Watching the chaos erupt around you is great fun. This guy's a goner, by the way

"THIS IS WITHOUT A SHADOW OF A DOUBT THE MOST POLISHED GAME THAT HAS EVER BEEN RELEASED ON THE PC"

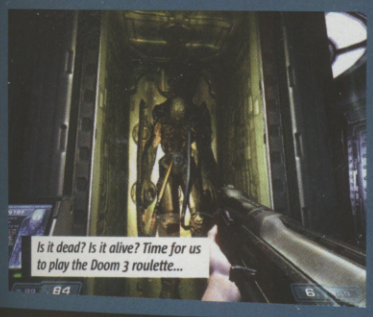

Half baby, Half moth: all slightly worrying

■ This is what we're talking about. You can't lop off limbs, but you sure can dissolve zombies into little puddles of bloody mush.

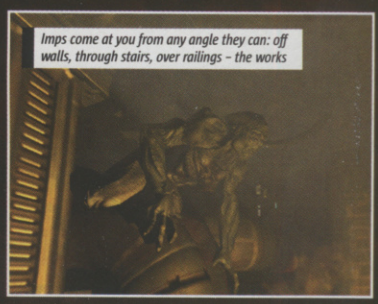
YOU KNOW I PACK A CHAINSAW!

The greatest moment is when you go blade-to-blade against a bunch of chainsaw wielding dead-heads...

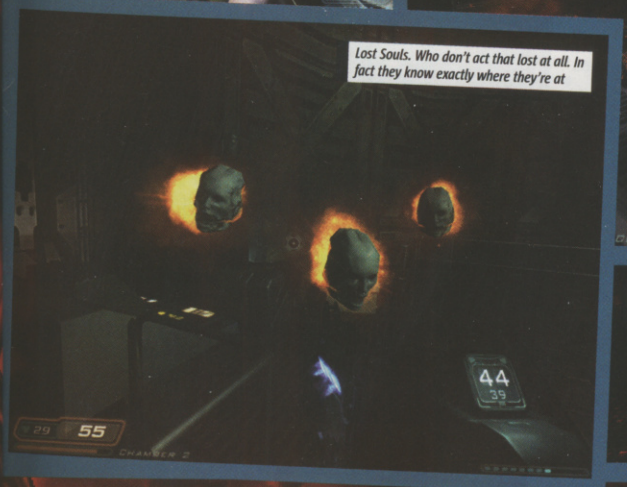
"THE XBOX VERSION IS ABOUT TO PUSH YOUR BLACK BOX INTO A SPHERE NO-ONE THOUGHT POSSIBLE"

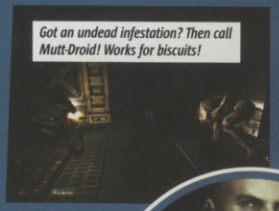

Is it dead? Is it alive? Time for us to play the Doom 3 roulette...

Hell slowly takes over the base, and it wants you out of the picture


Imps come at you from any angle they can: off walls, through stairs, over railings – the works

Pinkie Demons aren't as cute as you might think. In fact they're not cute as all


Lost Souls. Who don't act that lost at all. In fact they know exactly where they're at


Got an undead infestation? Then call Mutt-Droid! Works for biscuits!

Don't lose your head mate! Okay, sometimes old one's are rubbish too

PREVIOUS GAMES
- Wolfenstein 3D
- Doom
- Doom 2
- Quake
- Quake 2
- Quake 3: Arena

HARD FACTS
- Over twenty hours of gameplay, 11 weapons and 490 gallons of blood

DID YOU KNOW?
- Most of Doom 3's creatures are all-singing, all-dancing recreations of old Doom baddies. Retro nerds are going to be in heaven

of realism, but Doom 3 doesn't want to have anything to do with that lot.

At its heart it's a simple, balls-out shooter like the one's they played in the olden days: when everyone had centre-parted haircuts and thought that Oasis were a good thing. Because of this, those bred on Far Cry and Halo may find that Doom 3's brilliance occasionally wears off, and it isn't really helped by the fact that a lot of the routine sci-fi locations tend to blur into one another as you play through the game.

Then again, when you do feel your attention flagging there's normally something lurking around the next corner that'll pick you up again: a screaming Lost Soul bursting out of a sobbing woman's head perhaps, or the sudden acquisition of a chainsaw that comes in handy should you feel the need to inspect a zombie's hemorrhaged brain-casing. Your eventual trip to Hell (and back) certainly livens things up as well – and I'd be lying if the final descent into the long abandoned ruins deep within the Red Planet didn't ring a few pleasant Metroid-shaped bells.

HELL BOY

This chap is called Betruga – and he's evil. Can you tell? When he's not being Satan's pawn, he bakes cakes for charydee. Okay, we made that bit up.

FILLED TROUSERS

If you turn off all the lights, drink too much coffee, crank your speakers up to 11 and totally surrender yourself to Doom 3 then it will engross you. It will make you jump and it will continually amaze you with its dazzling arrays of evilness and stunning visuals. It's old-fashioned, but you'll still love it – even if sometimes you wish that you were fighting somewhere with a few less generic reactors and shattered sci-fi laboratories.

Nevermind though, it's still one of the greatest examples of PC shootery ever created, and seeing as there's a neat four-way deathmatch mode I suppose that we can forgive it. It's a fan-boy's wet dream, a gamer's heaven and (on the hush-hush) we've heard that its forthcoming Xbox incarnation is about to push your friendly black box into a sphere no-one ever thought possible. Sometimes, the old ways are the good ways. ✷

PDA YOUR WAY

As a tech-savvy Marine you carry a nifty Personal Data Assistant, which is like a grubby futuristic iPod.

You can download security access from dead grunts and get their emails and audio logs – which you play while you're exploring the complex, picking up clues about ammo placement and whether or not the bloke in question was aware his skull was about to become a metal-toothed flaming minion of Hell.

■ This fella's called Swann. He's on your side. Or maybe not. Who knows? We won't spoil it for you

■ Interact with computers in the same way as you normally do – with your handy, clickable mouse

■ There are a few rubbish puzzles. But, well, we'll ignore them as they smell like your nan's laundry basket

CVG 2ND OPINION

PAUL

I must confess to only having a brief hands-on with Doom 3, and it didn't shake me to the core as much as I had hoped. We've had two years to get used to how this game looks, and in that time arguably better graphics and physics engines have emerged from other developers. I'm deliberately playing Devil's Advocate here, but this should have been much more.

CVG VERDICT

WILL

GRAPHICS — 96
Unbelievable shadows, lighting effects, beasts and general graphical goodness

SOUND — 94
Whether it's a howling woman or a scuttling spider-head, it's truly ground-breaking

GAMEPLAY — 89
Old-skool battling and fear-addled trigger-fingering. Amazing but a bit old skool

LASTING APPEAL — 85
A few difficulty modes, but scripted attacks means limited replay. Think multiplayer

An amazing shooter that'll exhilarate as much as it freaks you out. Every PC owner MUST play it, even if there's a bit too much faceless futuristic stuff.

OVERALL SCORE 90

HOW IT COMPARES
FAR CRY
DOOM 3
HALO

RELEASE DATE: 10 SEPT

GAME INFO: COST: £39.99 PLAYERS: 1

CONTACT INFO:
- PUB: CODEMASTERS
- DEV: FREE RADICAL
- WWW.CODEMASTERS.CO.UK/SECONDSIGHT/
- CONTACT: 01926 814132

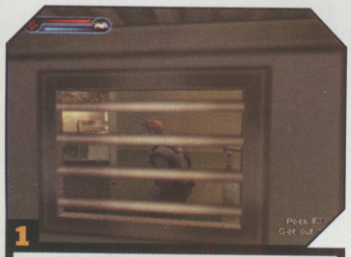
SECOND SIGHT

The game that lets you levitate enemies and smash their brains in on a wall

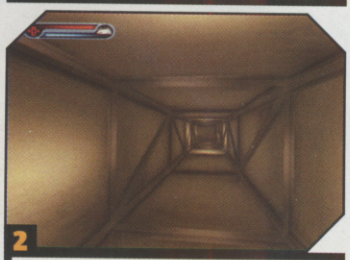
METAL GEAR VATTIC

When Second Sight's not busy copying Solid Snake, it shows some real genius.

Get spotted by the guards though, and dramatic conflict music fires up. Shake them off, and a tannoy announcement booms, 'Return to your posts!' Hmm. They've changed the word 'positions' with 'posts'. That'll fox those plagiarism lawyers! But there's more...



■ *Hey Mum, can you see me? I'm in a cupboard. I'm peeping out through the grille!*



■ *This is what crawling in a duct in the first-person view looks like. Inspired. Totally inspired*

■ *We're not harsh – we can forgive the stealthy peeping. A man needs to be able to peep*

■ *Have a pop at people from this view with your tranquiliser gun. Go on, you know you want to*

The first mental trick Second Sight plays on you is déjà vu. It's so busy trying to copy Metal Gear Solid for the first few levels, it forgets to be awesome. Hiding in cupboards. Crawling in ducts. But as Hideo Kojima's lawyers were about to file a lawsuit, John Vattic starts smacking corpses off walls with his brain and possessing commandos to slaughter each other.

Solid Snake? He's still babbling on about bullshit on his Codec. You're now officially balls-deep in a psychic thriller that's going to blow your mind. You're flicking switches with your brain and tip-toeing invisibly through a mental asylum to a soundtrack of demented howling.

HANG ON, I'M PSYCHIC

First off, it's slightly nob how the powers are phased in. Vattic wakes up in a nuthouse and doesn't know who he is. 'Somebody is pointing a gun at me. Argh! My brain! Oh. I seem to have accidentally flattened them with some kind of psychic blast. Oh look, I can heal myself too.' Aside from that, the story is ace. Mental children, dodgy Soviets, Siberia – it's all there. Narratives from the past and present intertwine and, well, that's for you to enjoy.

Free Radical has come up with a tightly put-together game in almost every respect. Non-player characters give you nice hints when you're going badly wrong, and don't just bang on for the sake of it. Graphically and sonically it's up there with the best PS2 has to offer. There's one problem though...

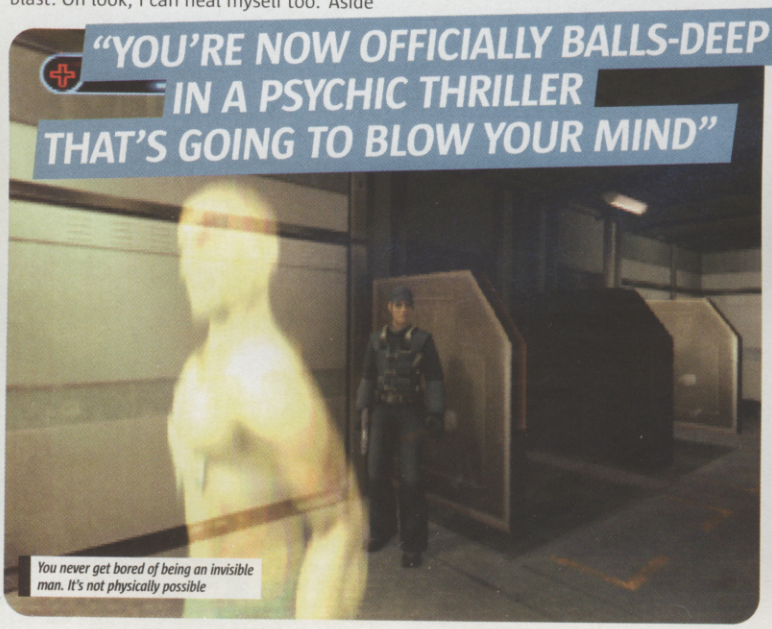
DRUNK ON THE JOB

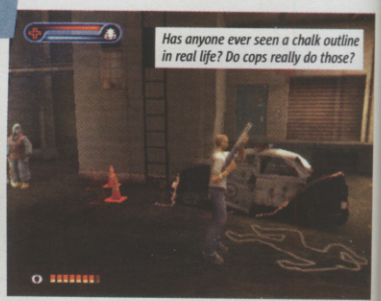
It's like the game camera went out and got lashed with its cousin, the TimeSplitters 2 camera, the night before. It couldn't handle its drink so well, and turned up for work still a bit worse for wear. Your two choices are a fixed camera (cinematic, but SO 1990s) and a free camera that's maddeningly imprecise. At times, it's going to totally blow your stealth.

You put up with this, because Second Sight constantly manages to be as cool as its icy Siberian setting. When you're strafing and gunning down a room full of guards with your automatic rifle, it's visceral and satisfying. When you're doing crazy psychic shit like giving guards a mental block so you can run around almost totally invisible, you feel like a genius.

KNOCK, KNOCK

Any game as strictly bound into a plot as this is going to be linear. There's no getting around that. Second Sight does well by offering you a lot of choice in how to go about your business. Frequently the Schwarzenegger approach works fine, but you get a lot more out of it by

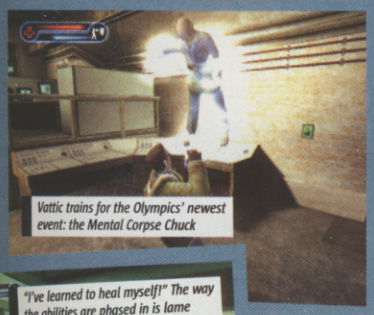


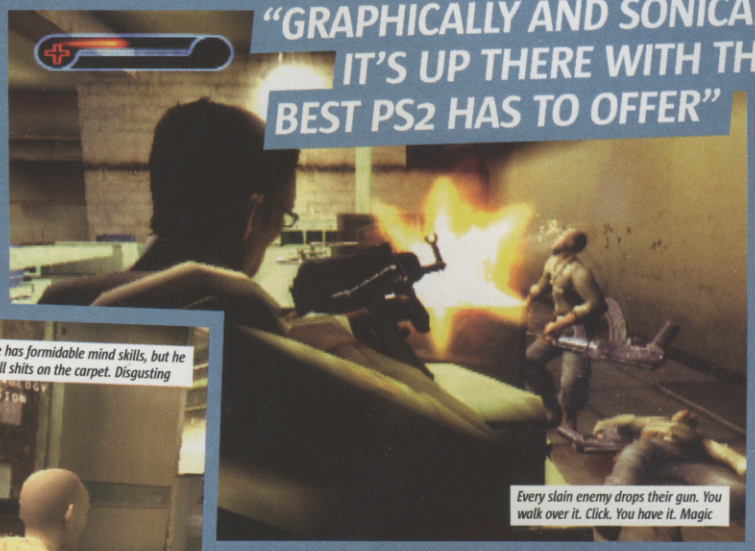


THE SNIPE IS RIGHT

■ Sniping. The gentle art of hovering a crosshair over someone's eye, before evacuating their brain out the back of their head. It's a simple pleasure, made even simpler in Second Sight. There's none of this scanning around bollocks. It gets right to the point.

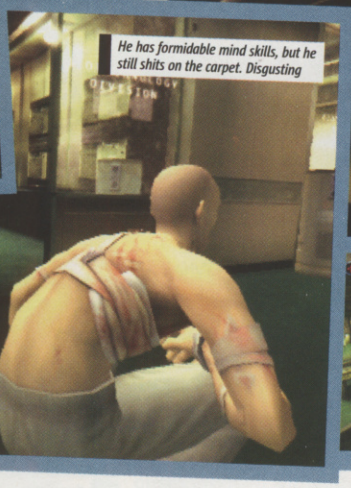
"GRAPHICALLY AND SONICALLY IT'S UP THERE WITH THE BEST PS2 HAS TO OFFER"

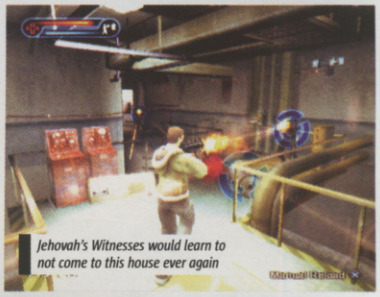

Vattic trains for the Olympics' newest event: the Mental Corpse Chuck

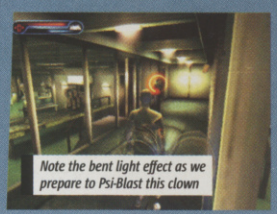

Every slain enemy drops their gun. You walk over it. Click. You have it. Magic

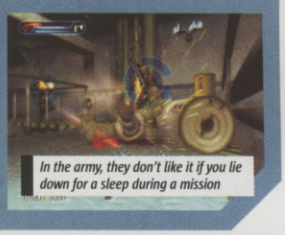
Should've gone to Specsavers

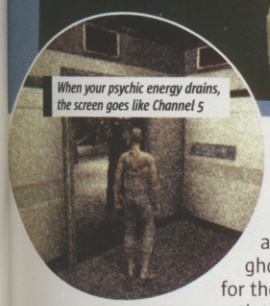
"I've learned to heal myself!" The way the abilities are phased in is lame


He has formidable mind skills, but he still shits on the carpet. Disgusting


Jehovah's Witnesses would learn to not come to this house ever again


Note the bent light effect as we prepare to Psi-Blast this clown


In the army, they don't like it if you lie down for a sleep during a mission


When your psychic energy drains, the screen goes like Channel 5

concentrating on what the game can give that's new. Like telekinetically shaking bins to makes guards panic and leg it, or projecting out a ghost to reccy ahead for the most stealthy path through. In addition, there are frequently multiple paths to get to the key locations in the game.

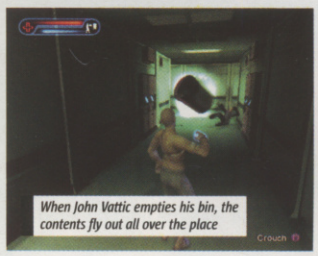
We love the simplified sniping system which manages to keep the thrill of nailing a headshot without getting too first-person on your ass. We love being able to peep behind doors Sam Fisher-style. We love the ICO-inspired section where you're busting your psychic co-star (and part-time Lara Croft lookalike) Jayne Wilde out of the nuthouse. You're constantly having to reassure her, but every shot you fire sends her catatonic with fear.

We'll never get tired of possessing guards, but we wish you could make them commit suicide. That would have been awesome.

SHORT BUT SWEET

A few more hours' gaming would have been nice too. Second Sight tells its fascinating story in around ten hours if you're tasty, but there's precious little incentive to replay unless you get your kick messing with soldiers' brains or having a slightly quicker completion time. If you're really keen, you could boost your morality rating by not slaying everyone in sight, but where's the fun in that?

But even with its modest running time, Second Sight elbows itself some room at the very top table of third-person action games. It's so good, we can imagine Solid Snake sitting down for a few lessons with Uri Geller before Snake Eater arrives. ✷


When John Vattic empties his bin, the contents fly out all over the place

UNCOVER THE PAST

Hidden retro games are the in thing with UK developers. Earth Impact is okay for five minutes, but Geometry Wars in Project Gotham 2 kills it.

PREVIOUS GAMES

■ TimeSplitters 1 and 2.

HARD FACTS

■ 16 chapters flicking between past and present
■ There are five different psychic powers: Charm, Psi-blast, Projection, Telekinesis and Heal

DID YOU KNOW?

■ Second Sight was initially due to be published by Activision, who mysteriously dropped it. Seeing how good it's turned out compared to, say, Pitfall Harry, you've got to wonder why...

YOU'RE SO POSSESSIVE

One of the coolest tricks in Second Sight is being able to take possession of people, neatly pulling the rug from underneath Nintendo's Geist before it's even come out.

You can't possess your foxy co-star Jayne Wilde and make her do a naked lapdance for you, though that's something the developer might like to think about. But this little trick is almost as cool...

■ Aargh! Got any Anadin in your bag? No wait, I'm projecting. Check my bad blue self

■ Bowl up to an enemy. They can't see you. Tap X and you're them. It's like you can type magic

■ Now wander Mr Commando back up where his friends are and say hello with bullets

CVG 2ND OPINION

MATT

Sure, this ain't quite the first ever psychic-themed shooter – Psi-Ops pipped it to the post last month. While both share similar telekinetic traits, Psi-Ops is the arcadey sibling to Free Radical's grand, engrossing adventure. We love 'em both, but this glistens with so much quality, you'll get sucked in to the point where you'll think someone is controlling your mind.

CVG VERDICT

ALEX

GRAPHICS 93
Brilliant. The snow levels are amazing, and the psychic effects rule

SOUND 86
The American accents are unwelcome, but the musical score is majestic

GAMEPLAY 80
Frequently genius, but chipped away at by a flawed game camera

LASTING APPEAL 72
No real incentive to replay the levels. You can beat it in ten hours

Starts off very Metal Gear, but then gets so good you forget that bandana-wearing peacenik even exists. Psychic is the new... not psychic.

OVERALL SCORE 86

HOW IT COMPARES
METAL GEAR: TWIN SNAKES
SECOND SIGHT
SPLINTER CELL: PT

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

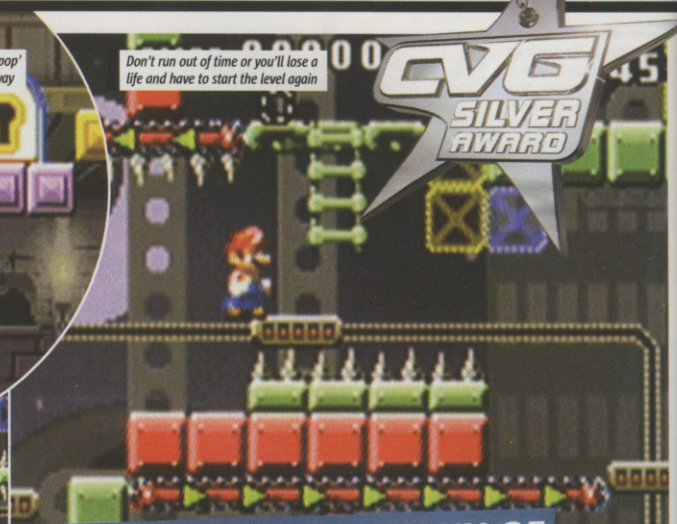
GAME INFO: COST: £29.99 PLAYERS: 1

CONTACT INFO:
- PUB: NINTENDO
- DEV: NINTENDO
- WWW.NINTENDO.COM
- CONTACT: 01932 895390

MARIO VS. DONKEY KONG

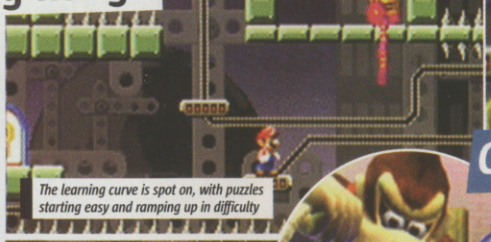
Seconds out, round 347! Mario's white gloves are off, but can he finally defeat the king Kong?

Comedy sound effects include springy 'boings' and a 'pop' when DK squeezes his massive head through a doorway

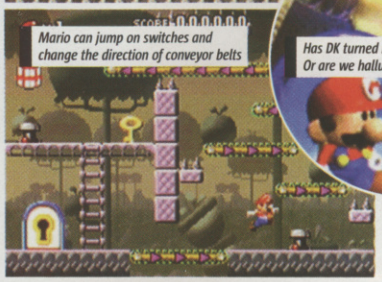


Don't run out of time or you'll lose a life and have to start the level again

CVG SILVER AWARD



The learning curve is spot on, with puzzles starting easy and ramping up in difficulty



Mario can jump on switches and change the direction of conveyor belts

Has DK turned into a space hopper? Or are we hallucinating again...

"AN INTOXICATING MIX OF CLASSIC NINTENDO PLATFORMING AND FIENDISH CHALLENGES"

Two mini-games allow you to gamble for extra lives. Mess it up and you get DK's grumpy face and zilch

You can leap on the backs of the cute purple RamRams and other animals in the game

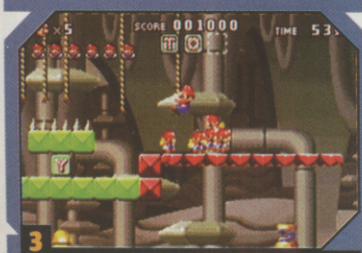
IT'S-A ME, MINI-MARIO!

The best bit in Mario Vs. Donkey Kong is guiding the hilarious little clockwork toy Marios through a level without getting them squished.

When you unlock the DK+ worlds, you have to guide the Mini-Marios through EVERY level, as they're holding the vital golden key to the door. Here's how you complete one of the first Mini-Mario 'Lemmings' levels...

1 ■ Here we go! First guide the toys to the first letter T - you need O and Y to complete the level

2 ■ Jump on the yellow button to activate the blocks to allow the Mini-Marios to collect the O



3 ■ Use the spring to jump onto the level above, then climb onto the ropes and lead them to the final Y

4 ■ Activate the yellow button for the last platform and you're done. Now get ready for a showdown with DK...

Mario has come a long way since he leapt his first barrel thrown by Donkey Kong in the classic arcade machine 23 years ago.

Now, as Darth Vader would wheeze, the circle is complete, with Mario Vs. Donkey Kong again pitting the nimble Italian plumber against his hairy simian nemesis.

In this magical monkey-puzzler, DK has nicked all the Mini-Mario wind-up action figures in Mushroom Kingdom, and it's up to Mario to get them back and give the light-fingered ape a sound thrashing.

BANANA SPLITS

The initial part of Mario Vs. Donkey Kong is divided into six themed worlds, with six main timed levels split into two sections. The first gives Mario the job of grabbing a key and opening a locked door; the second hands the plumber the tricky task of rescuing a Mini-Mario toy and releasing it from its crystal ball packaging. When you've unleashed all six clockwork Marios, you then move onto a magnificent Lemmings-style level where you have to guide the little critters into their toy box while avoiding any traps or foes, before reaching a final level where you can have a crack at spanking the monkey. Ahem.

And this is just the beginning! When you complete these worlds, you unlock a heap of 'Plus' bonus levels, with the subtle gameplay twist of having to take a Mini-Mario with a small key through the locked door, as well as a collection of mind-twisting Expert challenges.

JUMP MAN

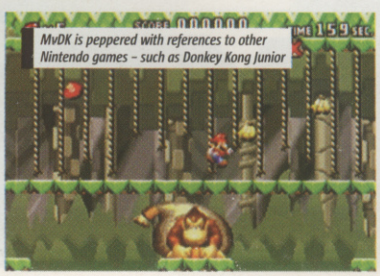
You have so many fantastic items for Mario to interact with that things never get boring or repetitive. These include spring jumps, hammers, ropes, wires for spinning on and leaping off (like Super Mario Sunshine), switches for changing the direction of conveyor belts and most importantly, three large red, blue and yellow buttons which when jumped on, make any platforms, ladders and blocks of the corresponding colour solid.

Mario Vs. Donkey Kong is an incredibly addictive game, delivering an intoxicating mix of classic Nintendo platforming combined with fiendish challenges that'll have you yanking clumps of hair out in frustration, but crawling back on bloody knees for just one more go. Unmissable. ✷

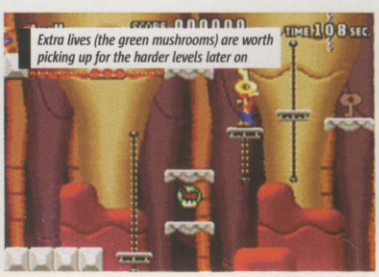
PREVIOUS GAMES
- Mario Kart Super Circuit
- F-Zero: GP Legend
- Wario Ware Inc.

HARD FACTS
- Three cartridge saves
- 92 levels plus bonus challenges
- Six Mini-Marios
- One large monkey sporting a red tie

DID YOU KNOW?
- Mario Vs. Donkey Kong is the sequel to Donkey Kong 1994 that appeared on the original Game Boy ten years ago!



MvDK is peppered with references to other Nintendo games - such as Donkey Kong Junior



Extra lives (the green mushrooms) are worth picking up for the harder levels later on

JAMIE

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS 87
Fantastic, with a cool, almost 3D appearance for characters and smooth animation

SOUND 89
Superb. Funky tunes, cartoon sound effects and loads of speech all crammed into the cart

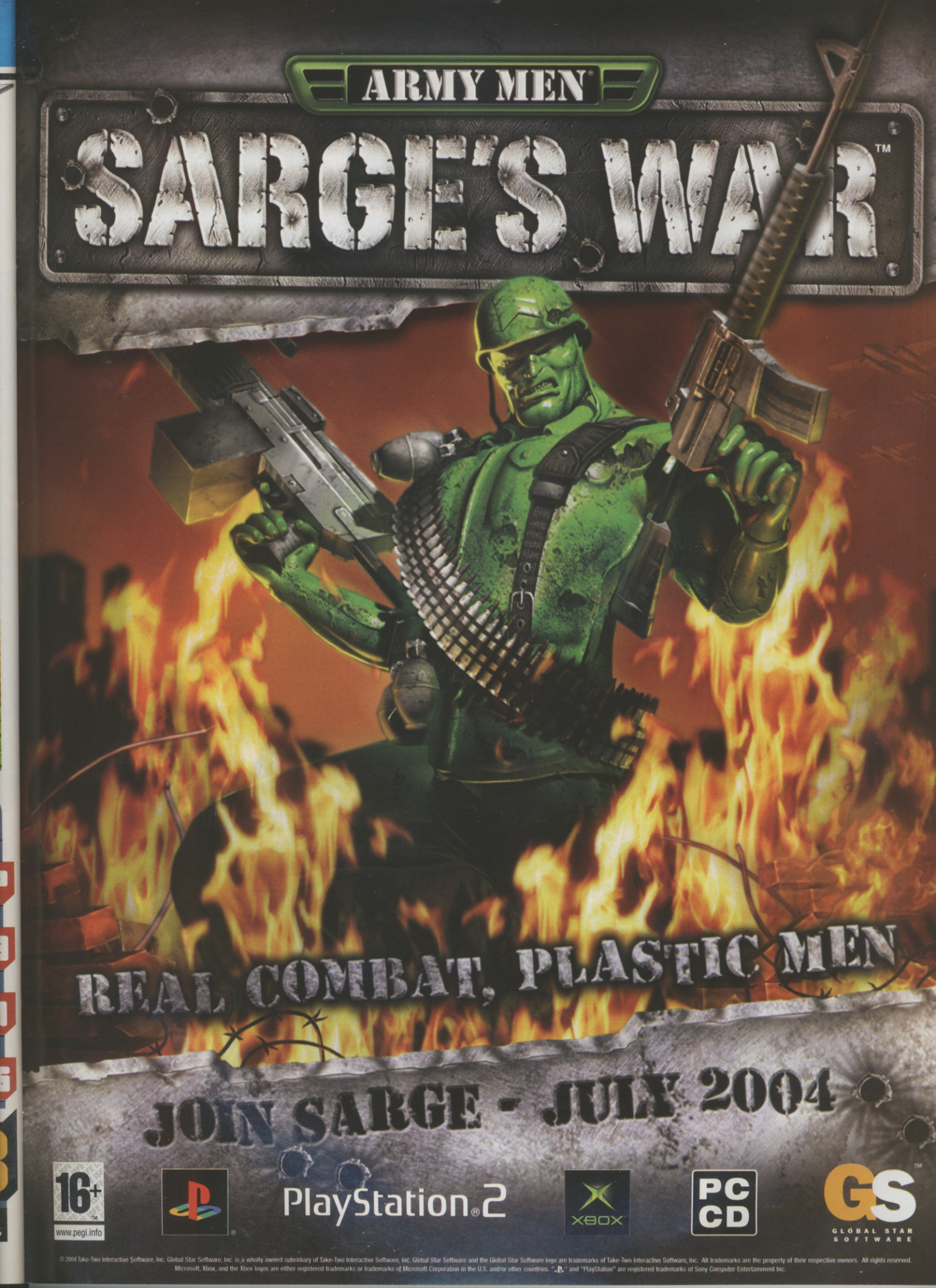
GAMEPLAY 91
Puzzle platforming at its best. Enormous fun, with that essential 'one more go' factor

LASTING APPEAL 86
With tons of bonus levels and challenges, you'll be playing for ages. But no two-player

Utterly addictive with smooth visuals and great sound, Nintendo's new colourful platforming adventure really is the monkey's nuts.

OVERALL SCORE 88

HOW IT COMPARES
- MARIO & LUIGI SUPERSTAR SAGA
- MARIO VS. DONKEY KONG
- SUPER MARIO BROS 3



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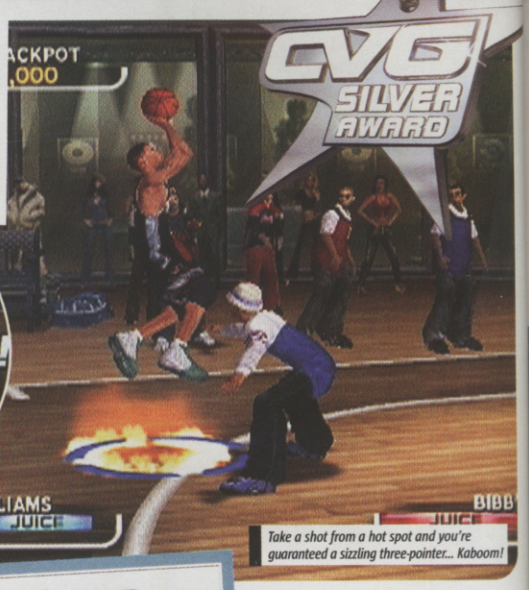
RELEASE DATE	GAME INFO	CONTACT INFO	ONLINE GAMING
10 SEPT	COST: £39.99 PLAYERS: 1-3	PUB: MIDWAY DEV: MIDWAY WWW.NBABALLERS.COM CONTACT: 020 7938 4488	VERSUS COMPETITION POSSIBLE WITH PS2, BUT NOT XBOX

NBA BALLERS



More street than if it was made out of pavement

Some of the plays are so fast, the graphics can't keep up!!!

Take a shot from a hot spot and you're guaranteed a sizzling three-pointer... Kaboom!

ONE UGLY MUTHA

You'll get a lot more fun from Ballers if you create your own player, because your guy can be really... unique... to say the least.

There's not a great deal that's different to, say, Tony Hawks' Career Mode, but with Ballers' Create A Face mode you can really go to town and try for one of the ugliest dudes possible! Make him a freak – go on!

1 ■ There are 15 types of face shape to choose, and every possible shade of skin. It's just so great

2 ■ If your mate has a big nose, why not upset him and give your Baller one just like it. Or maybe even bigger

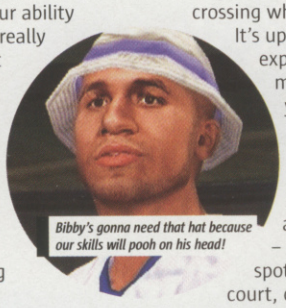
3 ■ We're always ripping on Davies for his long face, so we gave our Baller one too. Nice one

4 ■ Behold CV Gizzle, CVG's very own large-shouldered NBA superstar – ready to bring it and bling it!

One of the old TV studio execs for Rags to Riches strikes a pose that he hopes is real hip

There's an important difference between the real thing and something that's been created after its style.

The reason to love NBA Ballers is that it isn't 'street-style' basketball at all. Instead, Ballers is pure street basketball – where all that matters is you, and your ability to be the kind of 'playa' to really turn heads. Ballers is about being the individual, and Midway Sports has really defined what makes this so thrilling as opposed to anything NBA Street throws at you. Yeah, we know the Gamebreakers in NBA Street are B-A-D, but just wait till you're bringing down the house in Ballers.



Bibby's gonna need that hat because our skills will pooh on his head!

ONE ON ONE MAKES PHWOAR

Everything matters about the way your baller plays, and more importantly how his style suits the way you play. You're going one on one, which means the only way to reach the hoop is past your opponent, and the key to getting there is found in your character's extensive range of moves. We were pleasantly surprised to learn just how deep each character's skills affect the game plan.

Before each match a list of stats is flashed up, breaking down abilities into 11 categories, ticking what's good and crossing what's bad. It's up to you to explore what makes your baller tick and work it all to your advantage – use of hot spots on the court, or how impressive is their stunt dunk, for example. There's also the tantalising Extra Moves category to explore when all the basics have become second nature.

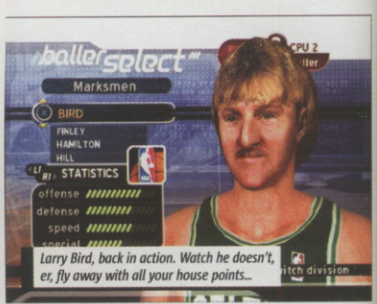
TAKING BACK WHAT'S THEIRS

Midway started acting the fool with its sports games years before EA's Big series. The announcer's voice hollering "Boomshackalacka!" resounding from NBA Jam when an 'On Fire' player slam-dunks 'From Out of Town!' forever has pride of place in CVG's Hall of Fame. We respect that EA had the smarts to develop on the idea for its 'Street' games, but we're glad to see Midway take the power back.

So it is that Ballers reclaims its power-up meter, used to fuel souped-up moves on the offence and defence, this time known as Juice. Your basic offence moves are alley-oop and shoot; pass (or 'dish') to the onlookers and have them toss the ball back, and a cheeky option to deliberately back down your opponent. To dance around the ankles of the other guy, your right analogue stick is used to juke. However the jewel in Ballers' front tooth are the Act the Fool moves, crowd-pleasing tricks intended to humiliate the other guy and encourage your fans to increase your bank balance.

Our first attempts at ATF felt random, we didn't have much of a clue how we'd done this or that, but over time we were able to memorise ones that worked best.

One-vs-one-vs-one: if that seems confusing, just wait until you're trying to win here!



Larry Bird, back in action. Watch he doesn't, er, fly away with all your house points...

The new generation versus the old, busting moves at Yao Ming's Preparatory Academy

When you've gathered enough codes, you can kick back and enjoy some of the cool little movies Midway has hidden among the

A VERY PRIVATE SCREENING

Inside Stuff menu. Though it's hardly the reason to own the game, it's still a real value-for-money bonus, that's for sure.

In 'How to Stop the Lakers' Popeye Jones gives his views from the corner of his mouth

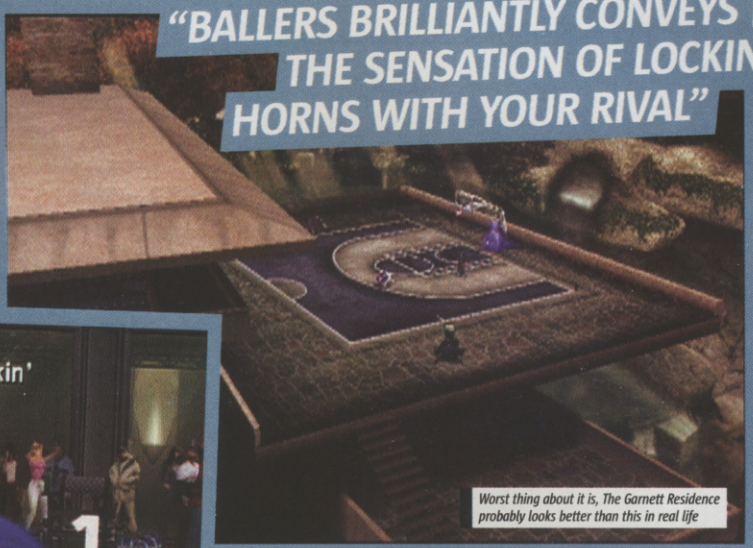
Bonnie-Jill invites us behind the scenes in 'Behind the Ballers'. Insert own gag here...

The 'Stephon Mawbury Promo' is probably the weakest of the movies, but still cool

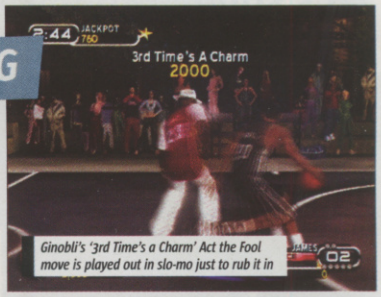
Easily our favourite unlockable movie is 'NBA Haircuts' if only for this NBA hat!!

"BALLERS BRILLIANTLY CONVEYS THE SENSATION OF LOCKING HORNS WITH YOUR RIVAL"

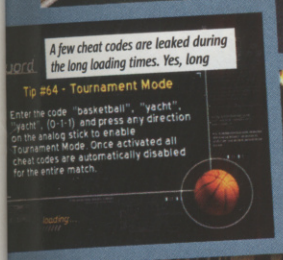
It's pretty nippy at The Malones, so McHale is making sure he gets a good warm-up first



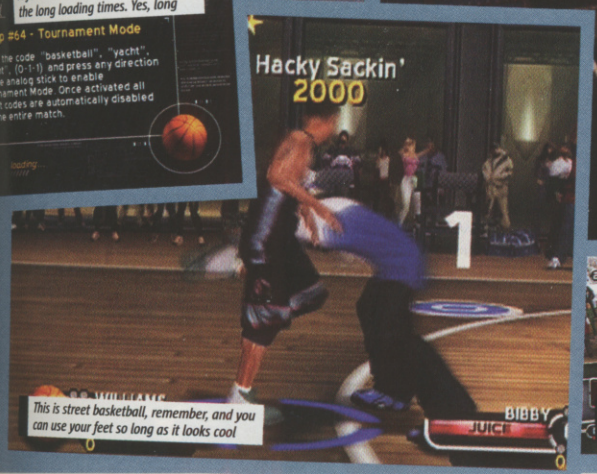
Worst thing about it is, The Garnett Residence probably looks better than this in real life



Ginobli's '3rd Time's a Charm' Act the Fool move is played out in slo-mo just to rub it in

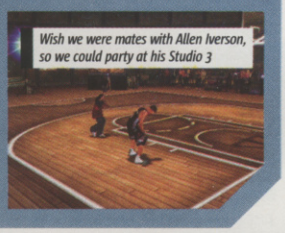


A few cheat codes are leaked during the long loading times. Yes, long



This is street basketball, remember, and you can use your feet so long as it looks cool

Every player has sassy signature moves reserved for when they're in the paint



Wish we were mates with Allen Iverson, so we could party at his Studio 3

By hizzle it means your head, dopey. Bounce off the hizzle into a combo for more points

GRAEME

CVG 2ND OPINION

I could stuff this opinion with izzles and hip-hop flows, but the fact is that Ballers doesn't need to be made any cooler than it is. It's a stupidly cool fusion of NBA Street's ultra-quick hoop shooting and the technical approach of NBA Live, with a sweet MTV Cribs twist. B-ball fans will relish the realistic mechanics and everyone will love the big-balling, shot-calling action.

PREVIOUS GAMES

- SpyHunter series, Mortal Kombat series, NBA Jam series, Psi-Ops: TMC

HARD FACTS

- Over 60 NBA players
- 24 NBA legends
- Over 40 types of tattoo

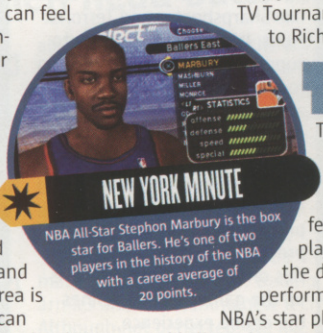
DID YOU KNOW?

- South Park creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone wrote and starred in a movie called BASEketball. It's really funny if you like South Park humour.

BRING DOWN THE HOUSE

The beauty of Ballers is that it brilliantly conveys the sensation of locking horns with your rival – sometimes a steal can feel as sweet as a slam-dunk on the buzzer (defensive moves can also be juiced, although limited to simple steals and blocks). Of course, the real glory is only found in scoring hoops, and authority in this area is the only way you can actually be recognised as being good at the game.

There are five competitive game modes, including Quickplay that gives you a taster of Ballers without consequences, straightforward Versus, and one-vs-one-vs-one Versus with three guys instead of two. The modes to care deeply about however, are TV Tournament and Rags to Riches.

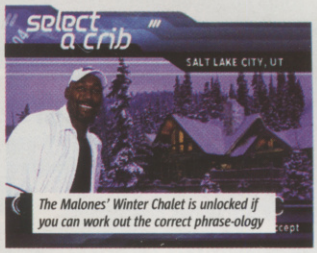


NEW YORK MINUTE

NBA All-Star Stephon Marbury is the box star for Ballers. He's one of two players in the history of the NBA with a career average of 20 points.

YOU SHOW ME YOURS

TV Tournament is where you unlock many of the game's extra features, mostly players, while living the dream of performing as one of the NBA's star players. It's the likeliest place you'll spend most of your rookie hours, enjoying the gameplay nuances that distance, say, Stephon Marbury from Kobe Bryant. When you've enough confidence combined with experience, and you've found your style, Rags to Riches allows you to create a player and build him to become even better than the best of the NBA, and with the riches to show for it. The pinnacle of the NBA Ballers experience is a versus match between two highly developed R2R players, and it's really something to savour. Put it this way: you're lucky this game hits retail at the end of summer. ✷



The Malones' Winter Chalet is unlocked if you can work out the correct phrase-ology

PAUL

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS — 92

Strikingly realistic players with terrific moves; some of the locations make you drool

SOUND — 83

Decent effects, although not as swish as the visuals. Cool tracks and okay commentary

GAMEPLAY — 87

Tight control, but because it's so intricate we were sometimes guessing at moves

LASTING APPEAL — 89

Great for quick-burst mini tournaments with mates; big rewards for dedication in R2R

Midway steals the ball back from EA with the most enjoyable, original street b-ball game out there. As deep as it is fun, the wealth of rewards is staggering.

OVERALL SCORE 88

HOW IT COMPARES

- NBA STREET 2
- NBA BALLERS
- NBA 2K3

WHA' YOU SAY?

Yet more secrets are there to be unlocked through Ballers' cute 'Phrase-ology' option mode! Hope you've been watching Countdown, guys.

Here, you get to experiment stringing up to four words together to form a phrase, just like we do on CVG. If you're clever you can access stuff like Kobe Bryant's house (not for real, just in the game!), and NBA Legends such as Magic Johnson.

■ Enter 'Nice Yacht' and you unlock Scottie Pippen's yacht where you can play on board

■ Name this NBA legend! Answer on a postcard please, but no prize cause we ain't mugs!

■ To get Allan Houston's alternate gear, the phrase is Knicker Bocker Please. Smirk!

RELEASE DATE	GAME INFO	CONTACT INFO	ONLINE GAMING	EXTRAS
NOW	COST: £19.99 PLAYERS: 1-8	PUB: UBISOFT DEV: UBISOFT WWW.RAINBOWSIX3.COM CONTACT: 01932 838230	CO-OPERATIVE CAMPAIGN, CONQUEST, CAPTURE THE FLAG AND MUCH MORE!	XBOX COMMUNICATOR, SYSTEM LINK, LIVE

RAINBOW SIX 3: BLACK ARROW

It's still packing them in on Xbox Live, so here's some more!

Securing terrorists rather than killing them is a good sign that you've stormed a room effectively

Another terrorist that has picked a very poor hiding place

Don't just blindly storm into rooms – push a door ajar and have a peek inside first

The Rainbow Six team fight for the hotel room with the view of the beach

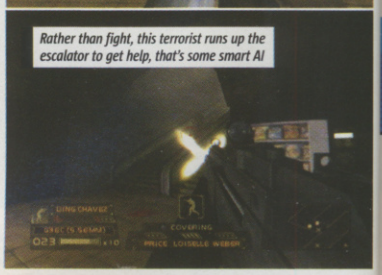
When you get good at storming rooms you'll have the element of surprise on your side

With over 20 multiplayer maps, Black Arrow offers a lot of gaming at a cheap price

CVG SILVER AWARD

"A REFINED ONLINE EXPERIENCE GUARANTEES IT'LL BE PLAYED ON LIVE FOR A LONG TIME TO COME"

That's one way of getting a seat on the London Underground in the morning

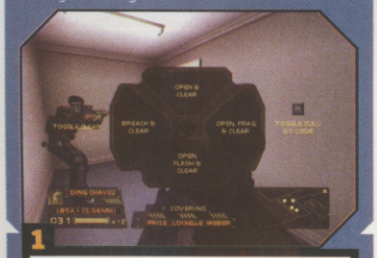


Rather than fight, this terrorist runs up the escalator to get help, that's some smart AI

THROW SOME STUFF

Being a sharpshooter is fine, but being good with a rifle won't win you the battle in Black Arrow – you have to be proficient with your other tools too.

Knowing when to storm a room with a flash grenade, or breaching the door with explosives can make all the difference between rescuing a hostage or losing them.



1 ■ Before every closed door you have to make a decision about how to tackle the situation

2 ■ Night Vision is another useful tactical tool as it can help you spot lurking enemies before it's too late

3 ■ You'll have to dive into your kit bag for a gas mask if the screen goes crazy blurred like this

The Rainbow Six series finally caught console gamers' imaginations last year with Rainbow Six 3.

At last, here was a first-person tactical shooter that could be played online. If screaming at your dopey computer controlled team-mates wasn't enough for you, with headset support you could cuss out human team-mates instead – fantastic! Unsurprisingly, it quickly became the most popular Xbox Live title and that's why Black Arrow has now arrived.

STANDALONE ADD-ON

Black Arrow is a bit different, though. It's not a sequel but it's not an add-on either. You don't need the original to play it but it's been made exclusively for Xbox because so many people demanded it. And it's half the usual price.

What you get for your cash is ten more one-player missions that can now be played co-operatively offline with a friend, as well as online. The way you play is essentially the same – don't expect any fancy new moves or features for you or your team-mates.

But enemy AI has had a workout to buff those terrorists up into a real challenge – they'll now even brave a hail of your bullets to find cover and sometimes back away in a gunfight to call for back-up. Plus there's a new one-player mode called Lone Rush that sees you taking on missions single-handedly and against the clock. Take out a terrorist and more time is added to the clock, giving this mode a real arcade feel.

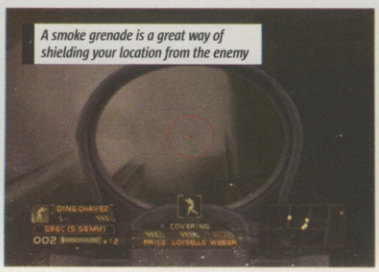
There are also new online multiplayer modes including Capture the Flag, along with Conquest where you must battle opposing teams to take control of key points on a map. They're class additions alongside already popular online modes like Sharpshooter and Terrorist Hunt. It's also the first title to support Xbox Live 3.0, allowing for user-created tournaments and competitions, better messaging and greater clan customisation.

If you're already a fan of Rainbow Six 3 then you probably don't need too much prompting to rush out and buy this one. Black Arrow tightens up the gameplay and refines the online experience, guaranteeing that this will be played on Xbox Live for a long time to come. All this for a bargain price too – Black Arrow we salute you! ✷

PREVIOUS GAMES
- Rainbow Six 3
- Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow

HARD FACTS
- 14 Multiplayer maps
- Ten new missions
- Ten kinds of assault rifle
- seven types of sub machine-gun
- Three sniper rifles

DID YOU KNOW?
- There are over 90 voice orders in Black Arrow that are recognised via the Xbox Communicator. Our favourites include 'Use it,' 'Cuff her,' and as a homage to Ben Stiller in Starsky And Hutch, 'Do it!'



A smoke grenade is a great way of shielding your location from the enemy

Another terrorist lines up in our sights for his moment of glory

CVG VERDICT

ALEX

GRAPHICS 80
Solid looking but nothing too flash, and the engine is a lot blockier than most

SOUND 85
Great gunfire, banter from team-mates and improved enemy screams

GAMEPLAY 88
Tactics with a kick, this'll engage your brain and your trigger finger

LASTING APPEAL 90
Multiplayer modes mean this'll be a hit for many months ahead

Despite only ten solo missions, at this budget price it's an excellent addition that'll go down especially well with Xbox Live players.

OVERALL SCORE 89

HOW IT COMPARES
SPLINTER CELL PANDORA TOMORROW
RAINBOW SIX 3: BLACK ARROW
RAINBOW SIX 3

RELEASE DATE 17 SEPT

GAME INFO COST: £19.99 PLAYERS: 1-2

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: KOEI
- DEV: KOEI
- WWW.KOEI.COM/LAUNCH/CRIMSONSEA2
- CONTACT: 01462 476130

PS2

CRIMSON SEA 2

If you don't fancy Ancient Chinese hack 'n' slash, then head to the future

The bigger they are, the uglier they fall – in this case, very ugly

Two players can team-up and see who takes out the most freaks

New playable character Feanay flashes us with her magical orbs

The melee moves are fantastic – they'll have you diving into crowded areas just to wreak more carnage

With a bonkers but absorbing plot and all-out hack and slash action, Crimson Sea 2 is a great example of how sequels should be made.

This action-fest addresses the flaws of the Xbox original, crumples them up like a used piece of paper and bins them, going back to the drawing board with an all-new control system and improved camera control that makes the frantic action a pleasure to play.

Once again you play Sho, the protector of the universe who faces another battle for the fate of humanity. Sho is accompanied by a second playable character, Feanay – a nimble female who is faster and more agile than Sho. As the game progresses and you increase their skills, the differences in their fighting skills become much more pronounced.

But it's the fighting that, although repetitive, is the star of this show. With thousands of enemies to wade through it helps that both characters are armed with a devastating variety of tricks. There's melee attacks, massive combos, NeoPsionic magic spells and a wide range of power-up attacks. Their ease of use adds a lot to the fun.

Ultimately though, like so many games of this type, what begins as a rush of adrenaline soon becomes too repetitive. With 60 missions, you soon find yourself going through the motions on auto-pilot. Shame, 'cos with a bit more variety to the levels and even enemies, Crimson Sea 2 could have been a real contender. ✷

CVG VERDICT

The action's fast and furious and a great control system will have you performing mega combos within minutes, but the lack of variety kills the greatness.

OVERALL SCORE 74

HOW IT COMPARES
- NINJA GAIDEN
- CRIMSON SEA 2
- SAMURAI WARRIORS

RELEASE DATE 3 SEPT

GAME INFO COST: £19.99 PLAYERS: 1-2

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: KOEI ✷ DEV: OMEGA FORCE
- WWW.KOEI.COM/LAUNCH/DW4E
- 01462 476130

PS2

DYNASTY WARRIORS 4: EMPIRES

If sci-fi hack 'n' slash isn't your thing then head back to Ancient China

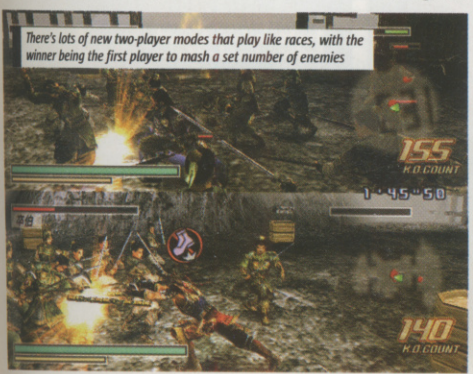
For all the tactical improvements, battles are still won and lost by controlling your heroes in the field

Fans of Dynasty Warriors should love this one. Empires is a new stand-alone game that expands on the button-bashing of the previous titles by throwing lots more strategy at you.

Borrowing bits from classic board game Risk, the map of Ancient China is split into 24 regions – the first warrior to unite them wins. A turn-based system of tactical planning is employed before each battle. You get to choose what regions to attack, pick your generals, lieutenants, weapons and any lucky items you want to take along to the scrap. Once the action hits the battlefield, fans will be in familiar territory.

You control the heroes of your armies and rush about battlefields helping out. One new feature are strongholds. Defeating the enemy in these spots converts the area to your territory. Even better, your troops also receive a power boost that makes them more likely to repel an attack.

Away from the battles you also have to make decisions on taxes, trading, building armies and researching new technology. Although not perfected, we like this mix of strategy and hack 'n' slash and the new two-player modes expand the action even further. The downside is the repetitive nature of the battles themselves and that the engine is starting to look a bit tired. If you don't mind those minor flaws then there's lots to enjoy here. ✷



There's lots of new two-player modes that play like races, with the winner being the first player to mash a set number of enemies

The hack 'n' slash action hasn't been refined from the previous games, so it can get quite repetitive

Battles use the same old DW engine, but there are still some exciting moments

CVG VERDICT

For fans of the series, Empires is an interesting mix of the usual Dynasty Warriors action with added strategy that makes an enjoyable diversion.

OVERALL SCORE 77

HOW IT COMPARES
- DYNASTY WARRIORS 4: EMPIRES
- CRIMSON SEA 2
- SAMURAI WARRIORS

RELEASE DATE
27 AUG

GAME INFO
COST: £39.99
PLAYERS: 1

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: MICROSOFT
- DEV: CLIMAX
- WWW.XBOX.COM/EN-US/SUDEKI/
- CONTACT: 0870 601 0100

SUDEKI

It's a Japanese-style RPG made in Britain – your wildest fantasy, or a cocked-up cross-breed?

Buki's spinning kick special attack can boot the hell out of a clutch of foes if you get it right

Regular cutscenes let you know when the gods have farted, or whatever

There's just something about Sudeki's look that makes us go 'N64 3D platform adventure'

PARTY TIME!

It doesn't take long in Sudeki before you're in charge of four characters.

Apart from their different combat styles, each has a unique ability that you must call upon to make headway. Many of the puzzles can only be solved by using the right skill at the right time ...

1 ■ Every RPG party needs one and Tal is the muscle here. If anything needs pushing or pulling around, he's the man

2 ■ Buki can use her claws to shred enemies and climb certain walls. She's rubbish at wiping her ass though

3 ■ Being the brains of the outfit, Elco has built himself a jetpack to get around. And like a true boffin, looks a tool

4 ■ Curvaceous Ailish knows a spell or two, and is the only one of the group who can dispel magic

Bosses are usually beaten by learning their weaknesses and routines, rather than simple RPG combat power

Where you find a war between a kingdom of light and a kingdom of shadow, you can bet your last gold piece there's an RPG lurking somewhere in the vicinity. So it is with Sudeki, a flashy, action-packed fantasy number that prides itself on a high-octane real-time combat system.

The story sees you initially in control of Tal, a young firebrand warrior in the Illumina castle guard. The peaceful lands under the control of the queen are being menaced by evil marauders, and it's all got something to do with the dark, shadowy spirit world. So when a princess is out of town, Tal is despatched to escort the royal bint (who, incidentally, sports an ass as juicy as Kylie's) back to base.

FANTASTIC FOUR

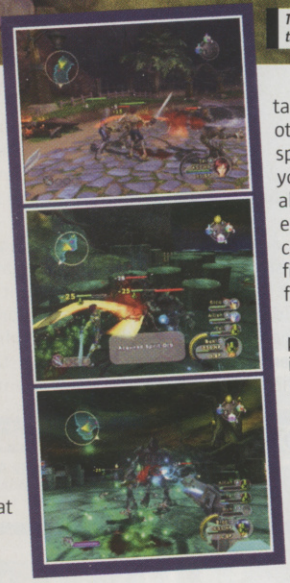
This being a sprawling fantasy epic in the Final Fantasy mold, of course it's not long before sparks start flying between young buck and bint, though the resulting love interest is about as gripping as a hug from a dead jellyfish.

This plucky pair are soon joined by Wolverine-clawed huntress Buka and crazy scientist dude Elco, a specialist with contraptions of all kinds. These four ill-fitted fantasy fighters stay with you throughout the game, and employing their various skills and specialities pretty much forms the core of the gameplay. And, yeah, you will be increasing their attributes and abilities with experience using the game's simple levelling up system.

While you directly control any one of the characters (using the black and white buttons to select between them at will), the others simply follow you around the place. All of them share the same inventory (in one of the game's many efforts to be easier to get to grips with), with only weapons and armour being specific to each character. Once the goblin crap hits the fan, however, the three companions you aren't in direct control of spring into action and fight along your side in spectacular real-time.

With only Attack, Defend and Retreat settings for the AI, there's little tactics to think of in battle other than when to use a special power or an item. So you're left to enjoy leaping about smacking hell out your enemies in third-person close combat, or strafing around in first person, engaging your foes at range.

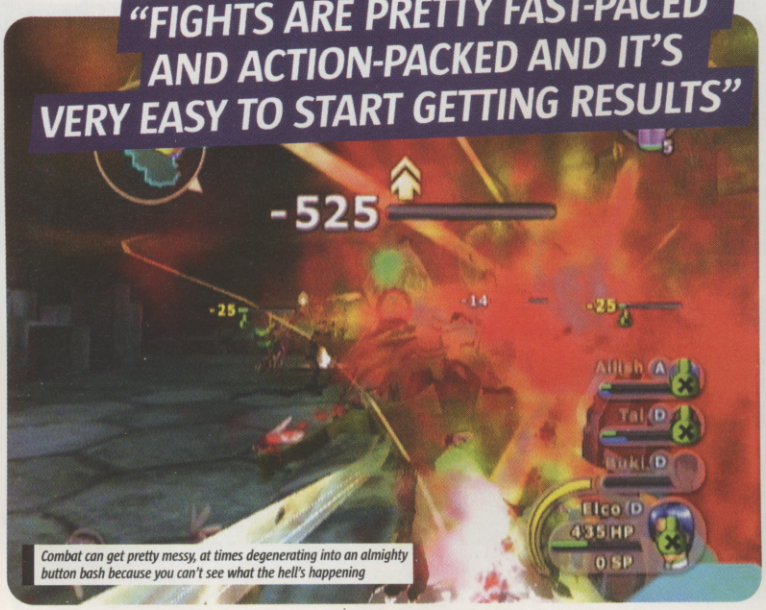
The fights are pretty fast-paced and action-packed, and it's very easy to start getting results. Combos are few and easily pulled off, and there's very little targeting needed, even when confronted by multiple monsters. Simply bash away at those buttons and watch the blood flow.



THREE DEGREES

But like any RPG worth its salt these days, the real spectacular stuff lies in each characters' magical and special powers. Summoning deities and demi-gods to wreak havoc on your opponents, or simply incinerating a flock of undead with an intense beam of sacred energy – these Skill Attacks and Spirit Powers are accessed by pausing the game and poking through your menus. While they do look pretty Tolkien-tastic, the whole special power

"FIGHTS ARE PRETTY FAST-PACED AND ACTION-PACKED AND IT'S VERY EASY TO START GETTING RESULTS"



Combat can get pretty messy, at times degenerating into an almighty button bash because you can't see what the hell's happening

Buki tries her best to castrate the insectoid, but forgets that it has a stinger, not a pecker

Tal's Shin Splitter Skill Attack is pretty damn useful early on in the game

■ Sudeki has got a really cool intro movie using shadow puppets – it's unusual and atmospheric. But as soon as the game

TOO CUTE

starts, you feel like you are in Generic Cartooney RPG Land, complete with clichéd and overly cutesy locations.

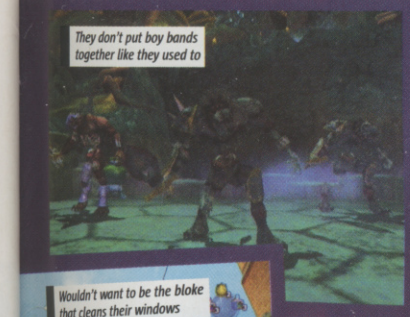
The awesome intro is really moody and cool, but the feel of the actual game bears no relation to it

Some of the countryside is bland and twee. Plus you can hardly go off the beaten path

Games with castles like these are starting to annoy us. More distinctive architecture please

Even the locations in the spirit world (which are supposed to be scary) look kinda Nintendo

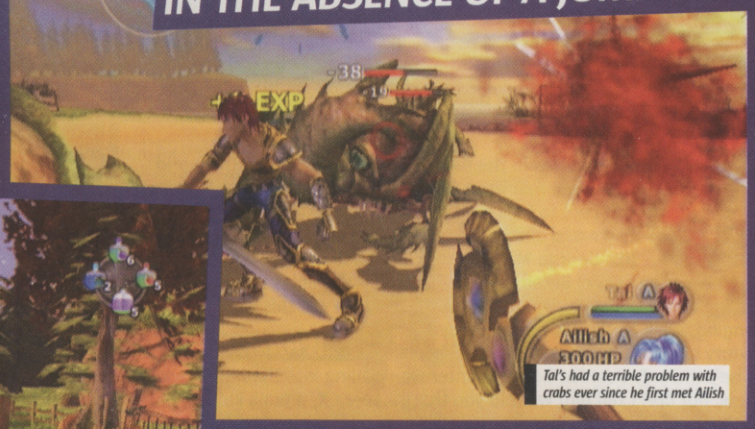
"YOU'RE HERDED LIKE A SHEEP, WITH KNEE-HIGH FENCES CORRALLING YOU IN THE ABSENCE OF A JUMP BUTTON"



They don't put boy bands together like they used to

Wouldn't want to be the bloke that cleans their windows

While the quests are pretty much on rails, there are side missions and mini-games to find, such as this spot of sheep herding. Great



Tal's had a terrible problem with crabs ever since he first met Ailish

Icons above characters heads show Curse, Poison or Slowdown effects

An RPG is not complete before you've met the giant spiders

Sudeki's certainly not short of colourful visual effects

When you're playing as one of the ranged attack characters, you don't want to let wolves get this close

PREVIOUS GAMES

■ Climax is best known for PlayStation conversions of PC titles such as Theme Park World, Diablo and Populous: The Beginning

HARD FACTS

■ 50 Health Points - the amount restored by a healing salve

■ 250 Health Points - the amount of damage caused by a Siege Ogre's stomp

DID YOU KNOW?

■ The Arconites (insectoid bad guys) weigh around 200lbs, stand around 8ft tall, and their favourite dish is raw human brains.

system could have been lifted from just about any Final Fantasy game of the past decade.

RICE CRACKERS

The easy-on-the-grey-matter approach is mirrored in the puzzles. Basically lifted out of games such as Tomb Raider and Zelda, the brain-teasers (involving pushing blocks around and mixing colours to open doors) here will only be a challenge to younger, or more stupid gamers.

With its animé stylings, cutesy characters, and overblown and corny manga-esque plot, Sudeki looks as Japanese as fresh sushi.

FANTASY WOMEN

True to Japanese RPG style, the ladies in Sudeki have blue hair, big round eyes, and norks like water melons. Not that we're complaining, mind.

Strangely, it is from British developers Climax. But for all its bright visuals and perky characters, Sudeki has problems in drawing you in to its world, and making you believe in any of its characters. Part of this is down to the lack of freedom to roam – you are herded like a sheep from one section to the next, with knee-high fences being enough to corral you in the right direction in the absence of a jump button to get over them.

PUFF THE MAGIC DRAGON

But the main problem comes from the twee atmosphere of the whole game. While some of the bad guys look pretty vicious, in the mould of the cave trolls from Lord Of The Rings, the general feel is more Teletubbies than Tolkien.

With its wonky, cartooney buildings and fairy-tale locations, the only dragons that come to mind in this fantasy wilderness are Spyro and Puff. Which pretty much pin-points the age group the developers must be after with all this kiddy-friendly fare. ✷

The way combat stops and the special attacks are conducted is straight out of Final Fantasy

COMBAT

Combat in Sudeki is primarily real-time, though you can switch to super slow-motion to access items and skills. Half the characters fight up close while the others fire magical bolts and beams from afar.

As you can switch between characters at any point, it's up to you if you prefer slugging it out in the thick of the melee, or standing back and providing support at range.

■ Tal and Buki both fight in third-person. There are combos to master, but there's not much finesse here

■ Ailish and Elco use ranged attacks, which can be quite fun, if a little undemanding

■ Switch to slo-mo to unleash your more powerful moves such as a Skill Attack or a Spirit Attack

CVG 2ND OPINION

ALEX

Something of a disappointment, this, especially after so long in development. Not that it's a bad game, it's just that it has turned out far more kiddy than I'd hoped. It's meaty enough to get your teeth stuck into, but it's THAT cutesy I'd rather be caught playing with my magical trouser sword than let my mates see me playing Sudeki.

CVG VERDICT

STEVE O

GRAPHICS — 78

Pretty solid, though it's all a little too chirpy and cartooney for our liking

SOUND — 77

Some of the music is massively naff, but the action sound effects are decent enough

GAMEPLAY — 76

Easy to get along with, and fun for newcomers, but all too similar for RPG nuts

LASTING APPEAL — 81

For a more kiddy-friendly audience, there's plenty to get your teeth into

OVERALL SCORE 73

Good, wholesome RPG fun for the young and infirm, but far too twee for those who like some balls with their Balrogs. Besides, it's far too limited and linear.

HOW IT COMPARES KOTOR · SUDEKI · FF X

RELEASE DATE: 27 AUG

GAME INFO: COST: £39.99 PLAYERS: 1

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: SEGA
- DEV: AMUZE
- WWW.HUNT-THE-TRUTH.COM/
- CONTACT: 020 8995 3399

HEADHUNTER: REDEMPTION

Just a chip off the old block or something to really lose your head over?

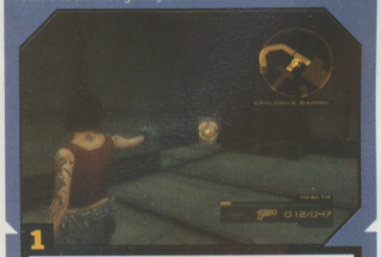
It's sometimes tricky keeping your sights on an enemy, but luckily they're not great shots

Graphically it looks good, but there's a strange visual effect that gives everything a haze

LOOKY HERE

It's great when a game set in the near-future doesn't go over-the-top with unbelievable gadgets. Headhunter keeps it real with a pair of special shades kitted out with IRIS technology.

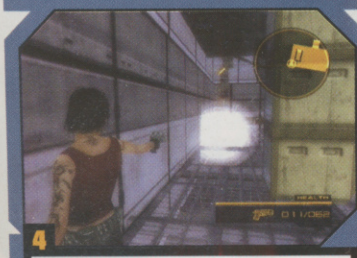
These special specs link to a database that lets you scan objects for information and clues, target enemies and view 3D maps. But you still can't see through laydeez clothes. Rubbish!



1 ■ By scanning this barrel the IRIS tells us that it's explosive. But then they always are in videogames

2 ■ One shot from a gun later and we've made a new entrance in the wall. Again, nice but hardly new

3 ■ By scanning a strange object on the floor, we can see that it's a proximity mine. So. not a butt plug then



4 ■ Thanks to the IRIS technology, one shot later and all the mine's are cleared and it's time to move on

Two decades in the future and some folk think it's still cool to talk like Clint Eastwood and have stubble like George Michael.

How do we know? Because we've been playing Headhunter: Redemption and hanging out with our favourite bearded bounty hunter Jack Wade. Come to think of it, he's the only bearded bounty hunter we know, but don't tell him we told you that!

BEST A MAN CAN GET

Redemption is the sequel to the critically acclaimed Headhunter that was released on Dreamcast and PS2 about 10 seconds before Sega's doomed console rolled over and begged to be shot. As such, a lot of people missed out on a gaming treat that put you in the shoes of grizzly law enforcer Jack Wade as he battled shady organisations bent on world domination.

For the sequel, 20 years have passed. Jack is still beating the streets and acting grizzlier than ever. Except the streets around him have radically changed. Following a massive earthquake, society has crumbled and risen again, creating two unique factions. The world has split into those who live Above ground in an affluent consumerist society and those Below – criminals, undesirables and the Ian Beale's of this world.

You can hide behind objects and lock onto an enemy before breaking cover

WHAM, BAM

Falling into the latter camp is Leeza X, a punk kid whose idea of cool is very different to Jack's. She goes for tattoos, crop tops and pert puppies; he prefers a square jaw.

Let's move the plot along. Jack once saved Leeza's life, and when fate throws them together for a second time, Jack once again decides to protect Leeza and personally train her to become a Headhunter.

For the bulk of the game you play as Leeza. You learn as she does what it takes to be a Headhunter and discovering as you progress that between Above and Below there's a sinister conspiracy at work. The action is pretty much unchanged from the original. You must investigate leads that take you to different parts of the city and sneak around and dispose of bad guys. Leeza can stealthily sneak up on guards, cling to walls for cover and peek around corners. She's also more agile than Jack, with a nifty cartwheel that gets her out of the way of gunfire fast.

As a lot of the game involves finding key-cards or objects that allow you to progress, Leeza is also pretty good at exploring her surroundings. She can climb onto objects, shimmy along ledges, run and jump over gaps and climb and slide down ladders – all with a great deal of ease. Lara Croft, take note.

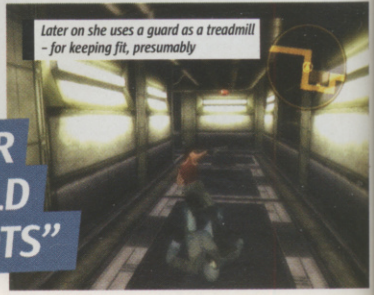
THE FUTURE'S SO BRIGHT

Leeza also gets to sport a pair of futuristic shades – futuristic because they boast a technology known as IRIS, or Intelligent Real-time Information Scanner for those fluent in techno-babble. These clever specs, not available in any stores, allow you to

Maybe if he took his finger out his ear he'd hear how stupid his voice sounds

"JACK ISN'T ATHLETIC BUT MAKES UP FOR IT WITH GRUFF ONE-LINERS THAT WOULD LEAVE ARNIE QUAKING IN HIS METAL BOOTS"

Leeza uses some athletic moves to evade a missile fired straight at her



Later on she uses a guard as a treadmill – for keeping fit, presumably

■ Ditching crusty old Jack so we can get our hands on Leeza has allowed the developers to create a more action filled game.

MOVE YA BODY GIRL

Leeza's quicker on her feet than Jack ever was and boasts some pretty impressive acrobatic moves to get out of trouble fast.

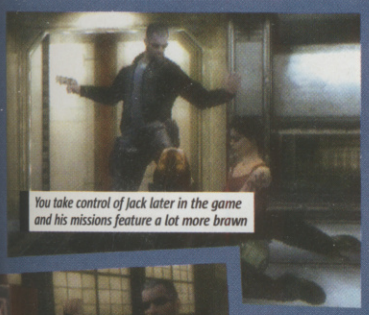
Sliding down a ladder beats having to slowly step on every rung. It's easier to animate too

Leeza's cartwheel is a smart way to get out of trouble... and a great way of showing off too

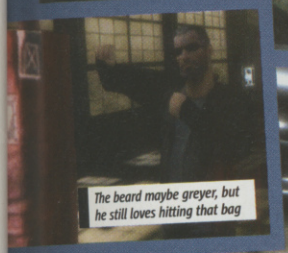
Ooh, a few centimetres lower and Leeza would've been doing the splits... in two

Another cartwheel – we just can't stop ourselves doing 'em. No skipping, mind

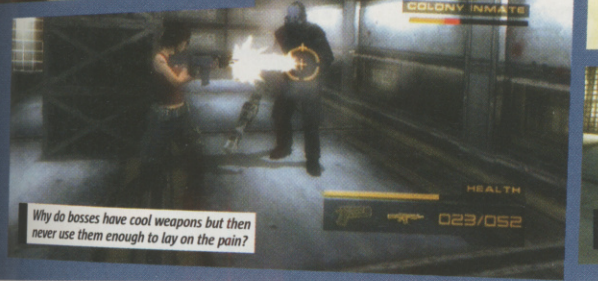
"LEEZA CAN CLIMB, SHIMMY, RUN, JUMP AND SLIDE DOWN LADDERS WITH A GREAT DEAL OF EASE. LARA CROFT, TAKE NOTE!"



You take control of Jack later in the game and his missions feature a lot more brawn

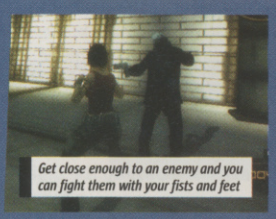


The beard maybe greyer, but he still loves hitting that bag

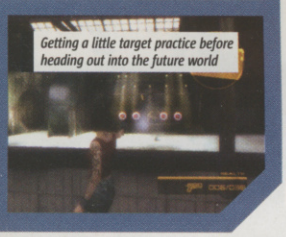


Why do bosses have cool weapons but then never use them enough to lay on the pain?

One thing that goons are good for – wiping the dirt off your shoes!

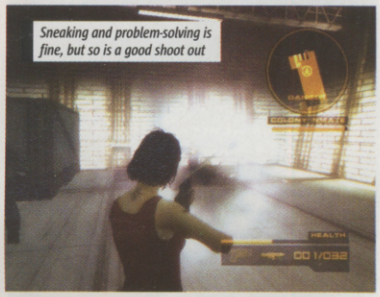


Get close enough to an enemy and you can fight them with your fists and feet



Getting a little target practice before heading out into the future world

There's plenty of stealthy moments, but not as many as in the original game



Sneaking and problem-solving is fine, but so is a good shoot out

PREVIOUS GAMES

■ Headhunter

HARD FACTS

■ Two playable characters
■ Two distinct futuristic societies
■ One very cool sounding villain: The Man Who Walks With Machines
■ One even cooler acronym MW3M

DID YOU KNOW?

■ For the original Headhunter, the developers were inspired by the sci-fi movies of Paul Verhoeven, especially Robocop, Total Recall and Starship Troopers. You can still see and hear the influence in Redemption.

view maps, scan objects for clues and can even aid you in cracking passwords (see Looky Here box).

OFF YOUR BIKE

For some levels you also get to control Jack; he certainly isn't as athletic as Leeza but he makes up for this with gruff one-liners that would leave Arnie himself quaking in his metal boots.

The one major change for the sequel isn't actually an addition, but the removal of the bike riding segments. In the original Jack would hop on his bike and race to the next location with you in control of the action, weaving in and out of traffic. It didn't really add anything to the game, so maybe it was a wise move, but what is left could do with a bit more variety.

YOU SPIN ME RIGHT ROUND

There's something swish about doing flash moves, and Leeza's cartwheel's are as flash as they come. We'd love to see what she does for a party trick.

HEADACHES

Redemption may be a well polished sci-fi game, but the action has a retro feel to it.

The Splinter Cell series has taken a similar style of gameplay to far higher levels with greater interaction, surprises and control. Headhunter is a solid game, but it feels like you're playing with something that was designed five years ago. The only improvement seems to be a new lick of paint. A shame as it's a solid-feeling futuristic world that's been let down by repetitive action. ✷

That blur effect starts to make it all look a bit, sort of, comic book

Hiding is fine, but if there's trouble coming you'd better get ready to act

THE FUTURE'S FUNNY

One big part of Redemption that we like takes place in the background.

With two skewed societies existing side-by-side there's plenty of scope for satirical pops, especially with one society built around rampant consumerism. Advertising, news reports and bulletins fill the air of the future. Make sure you listen out for them – they'll do more than entertain you.

■ The current world climate of fear is echoed in the game's political plot. Who says games are escapism?

■ This is the President of America. The son of a former President, he even sounds similar to George W

■ It's great seeing characters like Angela Stern from the original game, also aged 20 years

GRAZZA

CVG 2ND OPINION

Demoting Jack to a bit player and having Leeza X as the star was a brave move and it sorta works. She's more agile and athletic, but I preferred the first game's no-nonsense, balls-out ass-kicking. Redemption's at its best during the hardcore action sequences, but it's still a cracking third-person shooter and a welcome return for the series.

ALEX H

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS 82
A solid looking futuristic world, but what's with the strange blur effects?

SOUND 86
A great orchestral soundtrack with decent sound FX and voice acting

GAMEPLAY 78
Find objects, sneak around and shoot people – it's quite simple stuff

LASTING APPEAL 77
Providing you can dodge bullets, it's very easy to whiz through this

A great plot and well scripted but the action feels dated and soon gets repetitive. Trouble is, if you like this sort of thing there's better out there.

OVERALL SCORE 80

HOW IT COMPARES
SPLINTER CELL PANDORA TOMORROW
HEADHUNTER: REDEMPTION
ENTER THE MATRIX

RELEASE DATE OUT NOW

GAME INFO COST: £29.99 PLAYERS: 4

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: NINTENDO
- DEV: CAMELOT
- WWW.MARIO-GOLF.COM
- CONTACT: 01932 895390

MARIO GOLF ADVANCE TOUR

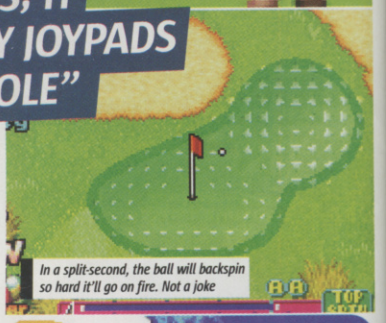
There's no Tiger. But there is a dinosaur and a big spiky turtle

Go-Go Gates: Hit between the flashing poles here, or your hole out won't count

To be continued. Look at him pointing towards his bunker. He's a dirty dog

This is Speed Golf. Peach can't stop chewing. Because of the TENSION!

A few famous faces. That we intend to hit with golfballs. Especially Luigi



In a split-second, the ball will backspin so hard it'll go on fire. Not a joke

Imagine that at the British Open. People would actually watch golf

"LIKE ADVANCE WARS, IT MAKES FOR SOME DUSTY JOYPADS ON YOUR HOME CONSOLE"

MY GLORIOUS CAREER

You can play wireless, linked or pass-the-GBA multiplayer rounds all day. It's great fun, but where exactly is that getting you, asshole?

FUN?! Ha! It's about trophies. It's about building your stats up ready to lord it on the Cube version. It's about unlocking a little guy called Gene. It's about having a cart full of eagle and hole-in-one replays you made when the heat was on in competition.

1 ■ And so the story begins. Mario? Pah. He's just a plumber, I'm a golfer

2 ■ Check my trophies out. Those are GOLF trophies. I didn't win the B.O. Championships

3 ■ Here's me transferred into the Cube game with my super drive. It's all over for Mario now

4 ■ Either I've identified a bird of prey, or I've just KICKED YOUR ASS you moustached fixer of bent pipes

Golf!? Is there anything Mario CAN'T do? Well yes there is. He throws shite parties. There's no beer, and no music.

You get to sit around playing board games. And he wonders why none of the fine ladies show up? It's not just because Luigi's pits smell like Bowser's jockstrap. He CAN play golf though, and that's why we're here.

Last month's import review sort of gave the game away. Mario Golf is one of those titles that goes way beyond convenience. Like Advance Wars, it makes for some dusty joypads on your home console. Master Chief can kiss your ass: you've got unfinished business from the bus with that cheating green dinosaur.

IN CONTROL

It plays like the GameCube version. You double tap for the kind of spin that makes the ball dance on the green. It doesn't look like the GameCube, because that would be ridiculous. It doesn't look great actually, but golf's not about bling. It's about dressing in plusfours like a tool and walloping a ball around. It's about igniting giant bombs and putting on greens shaped like Mario's face. Isn't it?

The real reason you're going to give yourself a broken back hunched over this is the RPG mode. You can finish the game by winning four tournaments, but the real fun is the little chipping contests and putt-offs. Every win earns you experience points, and you'll find yourself trying to boost up the digital You's stats at the cost of your actual life.

PREVIOUS GAMES
- Mario Golf Toadstool Tour
- Golden Sun
- Mario Tennis

HARD FACTS
- Five courses, with normal and star variants
- Eight characters to unlock in the game
- Unlock Wario, Waluigi, Bowser and Luigi by linking to the GC game

DID YOU KNOW?
■ A Mario Golf previously appeared on Game Boy Color. It was awesome, and we scored it a High 5 back in the dark years when that's how we used to rate stuff

FEEL YOUR POWER

It's worth it, though. Then you can be yourself in a match on the GameCube game. Your mate thinks he's the mutt's nuts because he chose Mario, and then you start ripping out 350 yard drives and caning his arse. Wallop.

The first few single-player tournaments are a piece of cake. Maybe too easy. Despite all the little arrows on the green, you can bang most putts in straight. If you aced the short game training, you'll fancy a chip-in from 30 yards or more. That causes problems in a versus game, where you really have to hit the tricky Links course to show any real gulf in skill. We'll never tire of wireless link-up play, though. Never.✷

You can type in swear words to cuss your mate in two player. We can't show that though

What you can't see in the tree is the bloke with the tranquiliser gun

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS 70
From behind the golfer, all is well. Looking around the course is a bit minging

SOUND 78
Mostly cool, but the classic Mario theme remix as you're putting hits a few bum notes

GAMEPLAY 89
You get a massive amount of control. Unless you use auto mode like a pussy

LASTING APPEAL 90
A lot to win, a You to build up, and a partner's career to shape as well. Adios, life

Yes, it's basically Golden Sun Golf. But Golden Sun was more fun than a lock-in at a strip club. Handheld sports don't get much better than this

OVERALL SCORE 86

HOW IT COMPARES
- TIGER WOODS PGA 2004
- MARIO GOLF ADVANCE
- ADVANCE WARS 2

RELEASE DATE
3 SEPT

GAME INFO
COST: £34.99
PLAYERS: 1-2

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: ACCLAIM
- DEV: BATTLEBORNE
- WWW.COMBATELITEGAME.COM
- CONTACT: 020 7344 5000

PS2 XBOX

COMBAT ELITE: WWII PARATROOPERS

Experience the battles of WWII from a pigeon's point of view!

You've got to be careful when going to collect items as they can trigger explosions or gunfire from sneaky Nazis

If a patrol of guards is alerted to your presence you've got your work cut out

The odd viewpoint makes it hard to spot enemies until they're standing in your face shooting

Friendly troops will provide you with ammo, new objectives and a moment of respite

There's been so many WWII shooters in recent years that there's one factor you've got to admire about Combat Elite – at least it isn't a first-person shooter!

Nope, Combat Elite laughs in the face of convention, presenting instead the derring-do of D-Day and other historic battles with a strange isometric perspective.

Unfortunately, that's the only area where the game strives to be different. The rest is standard adventure stuff as you take control of a lowly ranked Private and work your way up through the ranks, while battling through the Nazi occupation of Europe.

There's a straightforward, almost no-thrills approach to the game that leaves you underwhelmed by the action on screen. Follow your objective, shoot the Germans – and that's it!

The same could be said of most WWII shooters, but the difference here is how bland it all looks. The bird's-eye view might work if you could actually see more of the battlefield and plan your route accordingly. Unfortunately the camera is positioned too close to the action, so often you're only aware of a Nazi guard by the time a bullet whizzes past your ear. It looks bland, plays even worse and offers very little in the way of enjoyment. A pretty accurate representation of war then! ✷

ALEX H

CVG VERDICT

You'd expect this level of action and presentation on a mobile phone, not on a console. There's more fun to be had reading a history book than playing this.

OVERALL SCORE **52**

HOW IT COMPARES
- BATTLEFIELD 1942
- MOH: AA
- COMBAT ELITE

RELEASE DATE
10 SEPT

GAME INFO
COST: £39.99
PLAYERS: 1

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: ATARI
- DEV: BANDAI
- WWW.DOTHACK.COM

PS2

.HACK: OUTBREAK

This sprawling episodic RPG continues, and things are about to get a lot darker

Outbreak is darker and lonelier than previous instalments, especially as Kite's friends desert him

Bandai's epic RPG has now reached its third instalment and events are starting to take a turn for the worse. The corruption that has wreaked havoc in the online community known as The World has spread, jumping into the real world and blurring the two together.

Once again, our hero Kite is as baffled as you are by the twists and turns that come thick and fast – as do the endless dungeons you must battle through. Outbreak is also a lonelier and darker experience than the previous episodes. Kite's friends have turned their back on him, so for the most part he must embark on this new adventure alone.

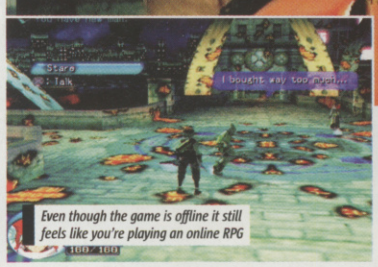
Luckily there's extra involvement from the Grunties to add a bit of light relief. Raise them correctly and they're more useful than a pig sniffing out truffles, as they can find hidden treasure and portals.

Sadly, this isn't a game for anyone who's missed the previous episodes. It's just far too confusing to get up to speed with the plot. The monsters are also at such a high level from the start, that if you're not carrying over a previous saved game your ass will be toast. It's another fine adventure, but the novelty is starting to wear off. ✷

The dungeon battles are starting to get quite repetitive, but at least the special FX shine

Raising a Grunty is beneficial as they can search for hidden portals and treasure

These boxes may appear harmless, but like all the enemies, they make formidable foes



Even though the game is offline it still feels like you're playing an online RPG

ALEX H

CVG VERDICT

Fans who've kept up to speed with the adventure will find it an absorbing experience, but the battling side is beginning to get very repetitive.

OVERALL SCORE **74**

HOW IT COMPARES
- FINAL FANTASY X
- KINGDOM HEARTS
- .HACK: OUTBREAK

RELEASE DATE	GAME INFO	CONTACT INFO	ONLINE GAMING
24 SEPT	COST: £39.99 PLAYERS: 1-4	PUB: ACCLAIM DEV: JUICE GAMES WWW.JUICEDTHEGAME.COM CONTACT: 020 7344 5000	1-6 PLAYERS, RACE ALONGSIDE YOUR CREW MEMBERS

JUICED

Risk your rep, readies and rides in the most hardcore street racing underdog of the year

Rather strangely there are loads of pedestrians watching your street races

You can't just hit the gas and push left to do donuts. Each car must be treated differently

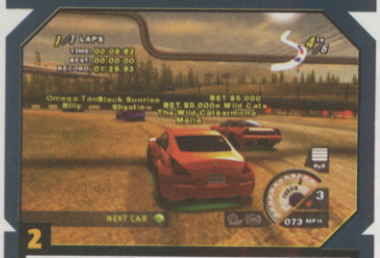
It's not always wise to stick to the tarmac. Cut across curbs and use them when possible for overtaking on narrow roads

TAKE A BACK SEAT

Feeling lucky and don't fancy risking your ride? You don't have to compete in every event that pops up on the calendar.

Instead you can place a bet on which car or crew will steam to victory. Check the odds, lay down your cash, cross your fingers and toes then watch the action unfold in real-time.

1 ■ When you enter the spectator betting mode you get the opportunity to check out the specs of each crew



2 ■ Having slapped your cash in safe(ish) hands, kick back and gnaw your fingernails as the action unfolds

3 ■ You don't just have to watch from the perspective of who you're backing to win – view it from any car

4 ■ You can also change to an in-car view. Sadly there's not a command button to scream "FASTER YOU SLAG!"

You might want to dip your knackers in quick-drying cement before playing Juiced, because you need rock solid plums to hack it on this cutthroat street racing scene.

So you've spent 50 grand tricking out your Clio Sport, lovingly crafting it into a one-of-a-kind tarmac torpedo. But to earn respect off the other racers out there and to remain a serious player you've got to gamble it on a Pink Slip race. That's where the winner cruises off with the loser's ride. Are your nuts dry yet?

There's even an inclined Indy-style race track to bomb around

See, Juiced doesn't pussy around. It's got bottle. The entire experience is a stiff cocktail of earning respect, building a crew, managing your money and maintaining a high-spec collection of fresh rides. But, of course, all this would mean dick if it weren't for the cool-ass high stakes gambling world that Juiced lobs you into.

ROLL THE FLUFFY DICE

Every decision you make and event you enter in Juiced is a gamble. You're about to enter a sprint race – do you spend an extra 2,500 bucks on an exhaust system upgrade to improve your acceleration or save the cash to place a higher bet, and risk having a slightly inferior motor on the start line?

Your mind starts whirring with possible options, even on a small decision like this. That is why Juiced is going to jumpstart the nerve-endings of hardcore fans of Max Power-style tinkering. There're are hundreds of official performance and style mods that you can perform on the rides you buy and win, and as in Gran Turismo 3 you've got to make sure that your set-up is spot on.

Especially as, unlike NFS Underground 2 or Midnight Club 3, Juiced's handling is less forgiving – slam the brake while turning a tight bend and you'll most likely lock the wheels, wallop into a barrier, dink your bodywork and damage the insides of your ride. And naturally the repair cost will set you back a fair whack, urging you to test drive every motor you're working on so you're comfortable and understand exactly how it performs. This gives you a wicked sense of ownership, as you get far more attached to your motors here than you do in many other racers out there.

PROPS FOR PERFORMANCE

So if you're snug with your ride it's safe to head out and try to earn some fat cash and major respect from the other crews. Unlike NFS2 and MC3 this isn't a free-roaming racer. It ain't linear either.

There's a cool calendar of events that you can pick and choose from. If you're not up for banging it round a Mixed event, and fancy playing up to your car's acceleration strength you could enter a Sprint-only meet. Otherwise you can call other drivers, and sometimes you'll get offered to compete.

Stack out classic rides like this vintage Mustang – just like you can in Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition

Ignite your flaming nitrous and singe the grass as you blaze through suburbia in broad daylight

Weave through cargo area by the sea – watch out for rogue containers though

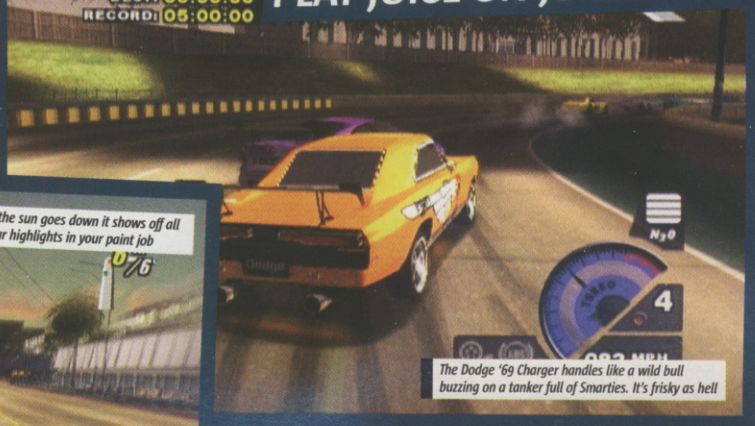
■ It's not all about beating the pack. You'll get to show how at-one you are with your ride in solo Show-Off events.

SKIDDING FOR 'SPECT

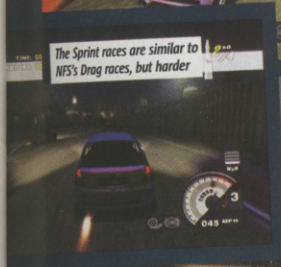
Here what it's all about is cutting together combos of mad drifts, donuts and other slick steering moves. We're liking it.

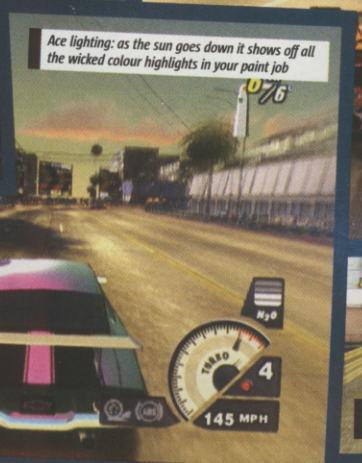
"WITH ONLY ONE DIFFICULTY SETTING, YOU HAVE TO PLAY JUICE ON JUICED'S TERMS"

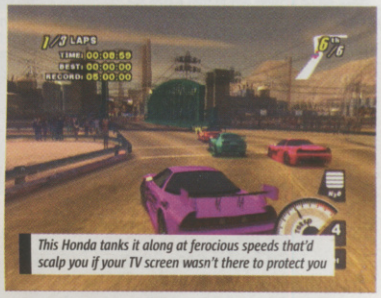
Bumping into barriers damages your paintjob and ruins some of your most expensive style accessories like neons


The Dodge '69 Charger handles like a wild bull buzzing on a tanker full of Smarties. It's frisky as hell

Barrelling into opponents will send you spinning and leave you with a hefty repair bill. Plus they'll lose respect for you


The Sprint races are similar to NFS's Drag races, but harder


Ace lighting: as the sun goes down it shows off all the wicked colour highlights in your paint job


This Honda tanks it along at ferocious speeds that'd scalp you if your TV screen wasn't there to protect you

The collisions aren't that impressive. No stunning spark eruptions as in Burnout 3

Do a Dyno Test in the garage and crunch some numbers to check performance

PREVIOUS GAMES

■ None

HARD FACTS

■ 7.2 trillion possible car style variations
■ Just under 50 cars to unlock
■ Eight areas to tear around
■ Race alongside your AI crew online

DID YOU KNOW?

■ According to Max Power magazine Jordan's tits are 'huge', her hips are 'shapely' and her arse is 'tidy'. That's good to hear, nothing worse than a messy arse.

But it's the way you perform in all the Circuit, Sprint and Point-to-Point and Showoff challenges that determine how much respect you earn from other crews. You don't gain equal respect from every crew. Say you beat a member of the Urban Maulerz crew and savage a member of the AWB crew. The Maulerz will up their respect for you, but the AWB opinion of you will drop for scuffing their paintwork.

If a gang's respect for you is super low they won't even let you attend events which they're hosting that appear on the calendar. Earn a smidge of kudos and they'll let you show up and gamble on who'll win. Gain more respect and you can race at these events. Once they're really impressed over time you'll get offered a winner-takes-all Pink Slip race. And get them worshiping you and you'll be able to host events, recruit crew members and enter them in races alongside you.

MIGHTY FINE ONLINE

It's an ultra slick system, but it's hard to earn so much respect. If you make even the slightest error you're punished, both socially and financially. And with only one difficulty setting, you have to play Juiced on Juiced's terms.

And that's nails. This is one of our major gripes, because it's a stink-load easier to lose cred than it is to gain it, and this can be seriously frustrating even for hardened racers.

Each of the eight racing areas has a unique look and layout style. The hills by the coast are bendy

The playing field is levelled when you go online, as you can seek out similarly skilled opponents and set up meets on your own terms. With all the one-player modes and gambling system implemented for online play, this is where Juiced should shine in the long-term. But you might want to varnish those concrete nads of yours before racing for Pink Slips online, 'cos here ANYTHING goes when the stakes are so high. ✷

PINK OR FROWN?

As you gear up for a Pink Slip race you'll start sweating sparkplugs, because all your hard work in the garage is up for grabs. But it's not just about being sentimental.

Cars you create are worth cash in Juiced – you can sell as well as buy and win them. That's why this is one of the tensest street racing sensations to be had anywhere.

■ AWB's Biggi rings you on your Nokia mobile and lays down the challenge. Accept or you lose face

■ It's a Sprint race. But what Biggi doesn't know is that you've maxed your ride out with some neat tweaks

■ Win the four-heat encounter and you blag the prize – a $50,000 NSX with all the tasty trimmings

CVG 2ND OPINION

GRAZZA

Honestly, Juiced has got one of the worst intro videos I've ever seen, so thank fook the game itself makes up for it. There's maybe a little too much artificial oversteer and the tracks can be a bit boring, but once you get used to the technical style you'll love Juiced's greasy depths. Soup the package up with some cracking online modes and you've got a top boy racer.

CVG VERDICT

MIKE

GRAPHICS 91
This is polished all over – slamming car models and silky smooth courses

SOUND 78
Sweet driving choons and chunky sound effects, but it's all just a bit too forgettable

GAMEPLAY 88
Titanium tough. Gambling, blisteringly paced races and smart respect system gel wickedly

LASTING APPEAL 85
One-player is expertly structured, but feels a little repetitive over time. Online has legs

Probably too extreme and hardcore for featherweight street fans, but if you live for tension, tinkering and high-stakes action Juiced is a safe gamble

OVERALL SCORE 86

HOW IT COMPARES
PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 2
JUICED
NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND

RELEASE DATE
17 SEPT

GAME INFO
COST: £39.99
PLAYERS: 1-4

CONTACT INFO
* PUB: SCI
* DEV: PIVOTAL
* WWW.SCI.CO.UK/GAMES
* CONTACT: 020 7585 3308

CONFLICT: VIETNAM

In the jungle, the quiet jungle, Charlie sleeps tonight

You can tell this grunt hasn't been 'in country' for long – he hasn't got a necklace of ears yet

It wouldn't be a Nam game without a little bit of helicopter Huey loving

Though it's squad-based, you'll want to go it alone due to dodgy AI

Even with a rocket-launcher, this isn't a sensible way to start a fight

Feel the wind rushing through your hair? Like CVG Towers after curry night

With Saddam behind bars and the US patrolling the streets of Iraq and Afghanistan, it was only a matter of time before the Conflict series ditched the Gulf in search of a new political hotspot.

Developers are growing increasingly nervous about picking out potential war zones for the fear of bad press that heads their way from the country they pick on. So it's a much safer idea to go back in time and re-fight a war that's already been fought. With this philosophy in mind, the Conflict series has decided to up sticks and head off to the war Americans can't seem to shake off, Vietnam.

NAM A LAM A DING DONG

The good thing about Nam from a gaming perspective is it's the war America lost. So there's a lot of bruised egos out there pining for a rematch. Conflict: Vietnam offers just that. Putting you in charge of a small platoon of men cut off from the rest of Uncle Sam's troops deep behind enemy lines during the 1968 Tet Offensive.

Before you're whisked off to the jungle proper though, you're quickly beaten into shape in a boot camp where officers who like to say 'Son' a lot scream orders at you. Here you learn how to fire a weapon, how to steady your aim, how to treat wounds in the field, follow the compass to your next objective and, more importantly, how to control a platoon of four soldiers.

The command system to control your men is ridiculously simple: if someone is injured, select your medic and move the cursor over what you want him to interact with. The same goes for clearing booby traps or telling your troops where you want to fire.

Each of the four soldiers in the platoon is an expert in a particular field. We've already told you of the medic; there's also a sniper, scout and heavy gunner. Conflict: Vietnam uses a simple RPG system where your team's skills grow as the action unfolds. At the end of each level you're assigned points based on mission completion, kills etc. These points can then be assigned to the various attributes of your platoon. In theory, as the game gets tougher, so should you.

NO BOOM BOOM SOUL BROTHER

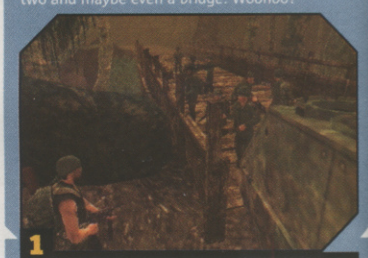
Once you're in the jungle proper the good work of the boot camp unravels. At the start of each level you're given an objective and the idea is to

After missions you collect Attribute points that you can spend on improving your abilities

WISH YOU WEREN'T HERE

With World War II you've got a million locations and scenarios to set a game around. With Vietnam the choice is severely limited.

Once you're out of the confines of the jungle where the vast majority of the fighting went down (well, according to Hollywood, anyway), then the only highlights are temples, a village or two and maybe even a bridge. Woohoo!


1 ■ The platoon get a moment to enjoy the sights of the jungle. Where's Ant and Dec when you need them?

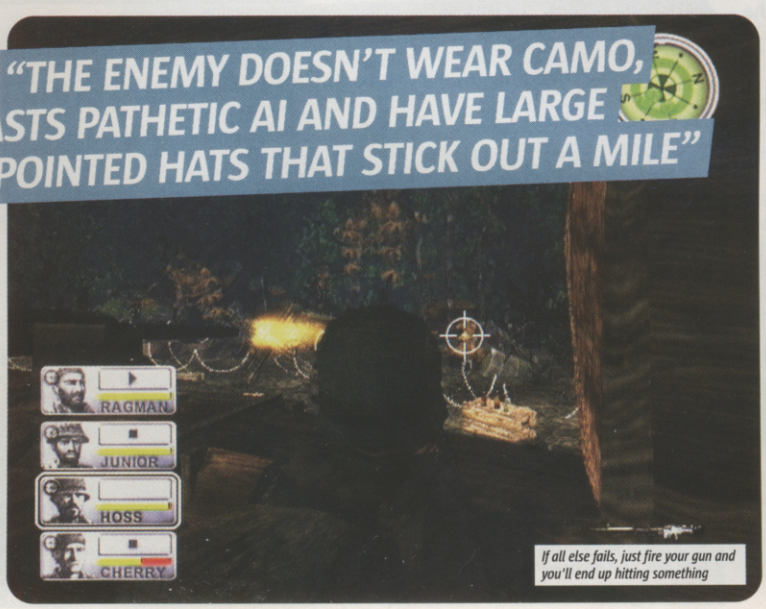
2 ■ Temples: one of the few respites from so much jungle, so the VC will be manning all of them

3 ■ With innocent civvies mixed up among the enemy, villages can be just as daunting as the jungle

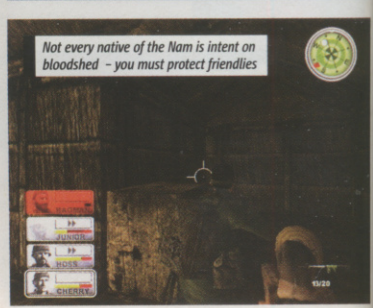
When the screen goes red like this, it means you're dead!

At times it feels like you're in the Wild West: a case of kill or be killed

"THE ENEMY DOESN'T WEAR CAMO, BOASTS PATHETIC AI AND HAVE LARGE POINTED HATS THAT STICK OUT A MILE"



If all else fails, just fire your gun and you'll end up hitting something



Not every native of the Nam is intent on bloodshed – you must protect friendlies

■ Charlie has a habit of patrolling the jungle alone in Conflict: Vietnam. It makes it far easier to take your enemy out when

CHARLIE DON'T SURF

there's no-one to back them up. What also makes it easy is the way the enemy constantly seem to have their back to you!

If it wasn't for their wide brim hats, it would be almost impossible to spot enemies

This is as close as you'll get to being friendly with the Viet-Cong. Make love, not war, right?

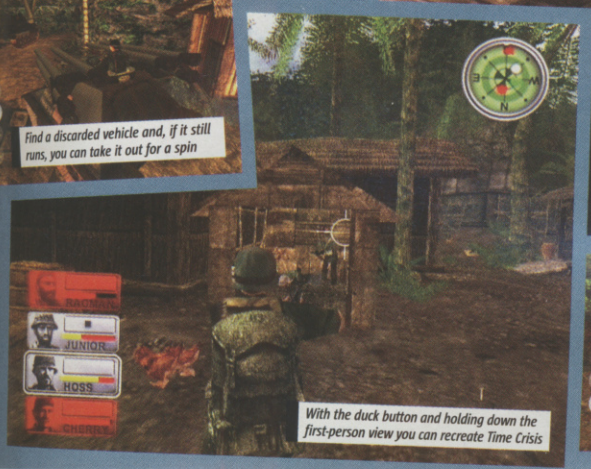
Another VC steps out for his last walk through the jungle. Why can't they hide any better!?

Occasionally the enemy can be cunning. They even hide in the tree tops... or they did!

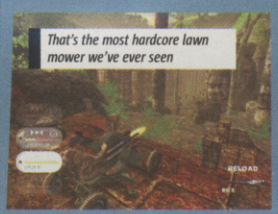
"SHOULD YOU STRAY TOO FAR FROM THE PATH YOU'LL FIND YOURSELF PENNED-IN BY INVISIBLE WALLS"

As per Medal Of Honor, follow the bead on the edge of your compass to find your objective

Find a discarded vehicle and, if it still runs, you can take it out for a spin

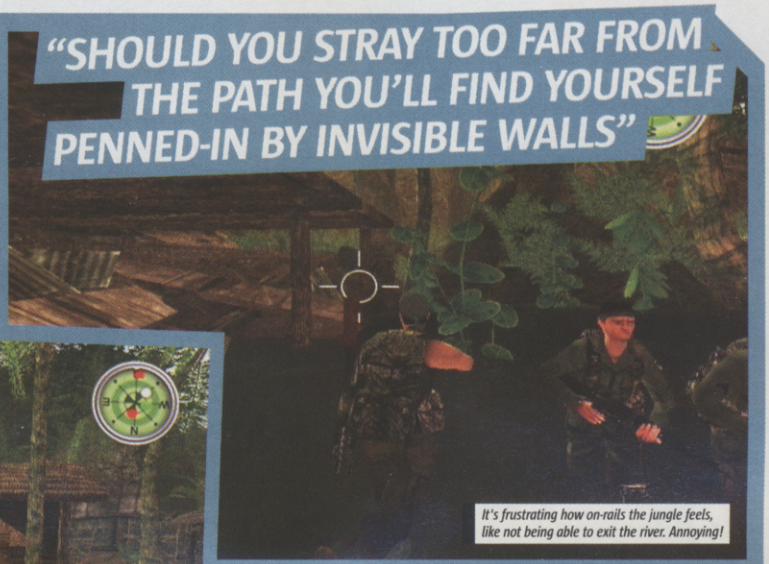


With the duck button and holding down the first-person view you can recreate Time Crisis

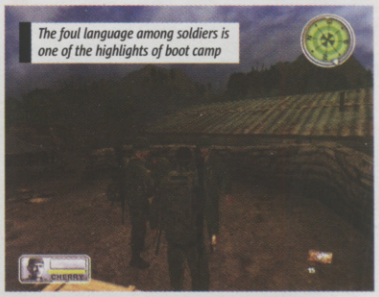


That's the most hardcore lawn mower we've ever seen

We didn't know the VC made tunnels this large and roomy



It's frustrating how on-rails the jungle feels, like not being able to exit the river. Annoying!



The foul language among soldiers is one of the highlights of boot camp

Check your platoon are covering your back – weak AI means they get stuck or freeze

PREVIOUS GAMES
- Conflict: Desert Storm
- Conflict: Desert Storm II

HARD FACTS
- Over 3.5 million Conflict games sold worldwide
- 14 jungle filled levels
- Three vehicles to use: boat, tank, helicopter
- Look out for VC booby traps: grenade trip wires, water mines, punji stake pit trap, 'bouncing betty' anti-personnel mines

DID YOU KNOW?
- In the Vietnam war the average age of the US combat soldier was na... na... na na... twenty. No, 19

follow the convenient dot on your compass to reach that objective. Should you stray too far from the path – and yes this jungle does seem to have paths – you'll find yourself penned-in by invisible walls, or large boulders, or rubble, or a river bank, or... well anything really as long as it halts your progress.

AI ARSE

In Conflict: Desert Storm, or indeed any war game set in an urban setting, the restrictive field of play seems less of a problem, but when you're supposed to be navigating a hostile jungle that has very distinctive paths you must follow, the illusion of a real world environment around you is shattered.

Despite this on-rail restrictions, it's something we could have lived with if it weren't for some other gameplay gaffs. In Conflict: Vietnam It's not so much a case of Charlie don't surf, as of Charlie don't think. Dumbasses.

RIVER ACTION

The enemy have a habit of popping up from anywhere – it's how they won the war. Though trenches offer more cover than water, Mr Charlie.

So not only does the enemy not bother to wear any camo (fair enough, they didn't really have much call for combats before the yanks bowled in), but they also boast pathetic AI, have large pointed hats so they stick out a mile, and patrol the jungle in one-man teams. Survival, then, is somewhat of a breeze.

Listen out for some amusing jokes during boot camp. The red flag one is good!

LOCKED AND GOADED

Another bugbear: the sights of your weapon conveniently lock-on to targets hiding behind foliage, so even if you can't see them, your gun sniffs 'em out. If only the US had this weapon in the real war.

Ultimately, Conflict: Vietnam suffers the big flaw in all Vietnam games and that is the war itself: no major battles, no coalition of forces and jungle that gets dull fast. ✷

CVG 2ND OPINION

GRAZZA

Scrambling through jungles with bullets fizzing past my head and mozzies nipping at my nuts fills me with moistness, which is exactly why Nam is such a letdown. It feels like a scripted stroll through papier-mâché jungles rather than Charlie-infested hellholes and the gameplay hasn't evolved since CDS2. The series needs a good kick up the arse after this.

CVG VERDICT

ALEX H

GRAPHICS 78
Lots of nice foliage, but it all starts to look too similar and messy all too soon

SOUND 82
Great banter between the troops and good use of 60's pop classics

GAMEPLAY 68
Here's where things go bad. The enemy are predictable and so is everything else

LASTING APPEAL 5P
It's quite frustrating to play and there's no real incentive to do it all again

OVERALL SCORE 66

We wanted Conflict: Vietnam to be brilliant but it's dull and uninspiring. If this was what fighting in Vietnam was really like, we're glad we missed out.

HOW IT COMPARES
- FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR
- CONFLICT: VIETNAM
- CONFLICT: DESERT STORM II

FRIENDLY FIRE

The opening level places you in a US boot camp. Yeah, yeah, we know it's not exactly original, but they did it in Full Metal Jacket, and besides, even shooter veterans get a little rusty.

So make the most of your chance to kick-back, chat with fellow grunts and learn some basic skills. To set the scene you'll also hear some great 60's music – it's almost like being there. Peace out, dude.

■ Yes that's a doctor but no, this isn't a surgery mini-game. Though it could be some sorta sick initiation

■ No boot camp's complete without a bit of live ammunition firing... by the fattie into his own head

■ The friendly base you start the game in, is unfortunately, the best looking level in the game

RELEASE DATE
24 SEP

GAME INFO
COST: £39.99
PLAYERS: 1

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: NINTENDO
- DEV: NINTENDO
- WWW.ANIMAL-CROSSING.COM
- CONTACT: 01932 895390

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

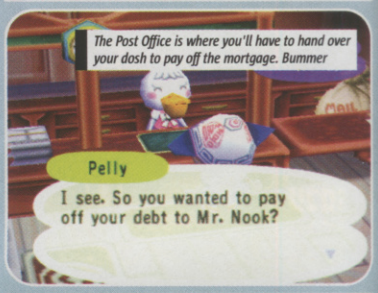
ANIMAL CROSSING

A virtual life of debt and hard graft – it's crazy but great fun

CVG SILVER AWARD

Fishing in real life is for lame-os. Luckily in AC the fish appear far more often than in real life

Chopping down trees is essential or your town will become an overgrown jungle



The Post Office is where you'll have to hand over your dosh to pay off the mortgage. Bummer

There is absolutely zero crime in this town: unrealistic. This cop does nothing: realistic

Now this is more like it. Check out our Chinese theme furniture. You love our style, dudes

Imagine a world where you can get a mortgage from a talking Raccoon. Where you can pick an orange from a tree and flog it for 500 quid. Where you can have a sofa delivered in an envelope in the form of a leaf, and it only turns into its full form when the leaf is thrown to the floor.

Does that make absolutely no sense to you? It makes perfect sense to us. That's because we've got a virtual life in the animal-filled dimension of Animal Crossing. Animal Crossing makes no attempt to mimic the real world and it's that wacky, off-the-wall style that makes it so cool.

CLASS ACT

When you start a new game in Animal Crossing, your town is generated randomly.

This means that each and every person will have different animal friends, different land layout (like the river and the trees), different fruit and even the shops are in different places.

This is what makes visiting a mate's town interesting. Slot in your friend's Memory Card with their unique town data on it, and you can use the train station in the north to visit their town.

NO MORE PAIN

In Harvest Moon: A Wonderful Life on Cube, despite it's title, running the farm could be far from wonderful at times. Make one mistake and crops could wither, or an animal could snuff it. There's no such potential for disaster in Animal Crossing. You start off poor with a small hut that looks more like a public toilet than a home, and gradually work your way up to splashing out on a papa bear-sized crib with an upstairs and a basement.

You can be lazy if you want to, strolling around aimlessly like a homeless bum, but where's the fun in that? It's all about raking in the cash and it's up to you to get out, do some deliveries for the animals around town, gather fruit, fossils and other items to sell and set up your home like a palace. And there's a rewarding sense of achievement for every step you take.

PREVIOUS GAMES
- Super Mario Sunshine
- Legend Of Zelda: Wind Waker
- Metroid Prime

HARD FACTS
- Foreign fruit is worth 500 Bells (AC currency)
- Up to four players can own a house in one town
- You can extend your gaff to a max of three floors

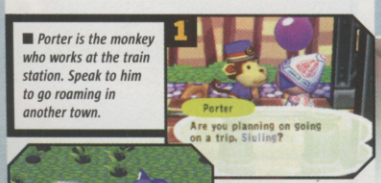
DID YOU KNOW?
- Animal Crossing was originally released in Japan on the N64, titled Animal Forest. The simple graphics on the GC version are almost identical to the 64, but UK never got a sniff.

TOTAL ADDICTION

Animal Crossing is the type of game that'll have you thinking about it when you're at school or work, when you're on the bog or in your car. The game actually runs in real-time using Cube's internal clock, so it becomes a 24-hour affair. Specific events only happen at certain times in the day or particular times of the week.

You'll be writing diary notes to make sure you catch the black market in town, or meet the mayor at the Well.

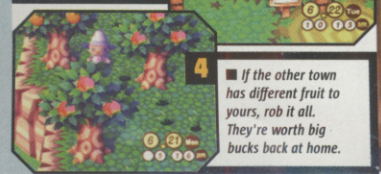
Animal Crossing is nothing short of captivating. With potential to effect or even take over your real life and dominate your everyday thoughts. You'll love it. ✷



1 ■ Porter is the monkey who works at the train station. Speak to him to go roaming in another town.

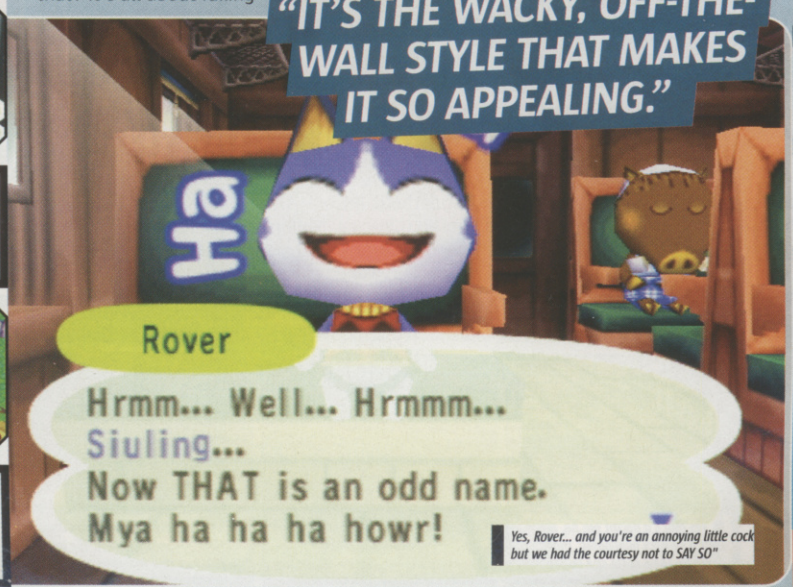
2 ■ You'll get to make new friends, who'll remember and talk about you even when you return home.

3 ■ You can poke around in their dump area, which might have some interesting things you can loot.



4 ■ If the other town has different fruit to yours, rob it all. They're worth big bucks back at home.

"IT'S THE WACKY, OFF-THE-WALL STYLE THAT MAKES IT SO APPEALING."



Yes, Rover... and you're an annoying little cock but we had the courtesy not to SAY SO"

CVG VERDICT

MIKE J

GRAPHICS 84
The visuals are simple but full of colour and bursting with personality

SOUND 88
Cool. Typically loveable Nintendo tunes that'll you'll whistle and nod to

GAMEPLAY 90
Instantly playable and a surprisingly in-depth and feature-packed game

LASTING APPEAL 91
Can last years but we reckon you'll be addicted for at least three months

Action fans will sneer at Animal Crossing, but behind the Noddy graphics and is a masterpiece. Be warned though, it'll eat your social life whole.

OVERALL SCORE 89

HOW IT COMPARES
THE SIMS
ANIMAL CROSSING
HARVEST MOON

RELEASE DATE
OUT NOW

GAME INFO
COST: £19.99
PLAYERS: 1

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: TAKE 2
- DEV: SILVER WISH
- WWW.GATHERING.COM/WINGSOFWAR/
- CONTACT: 01753 854444

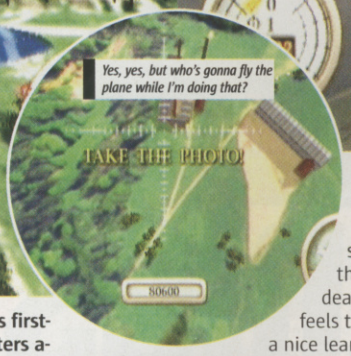
XBOX

WINGS OF WAR

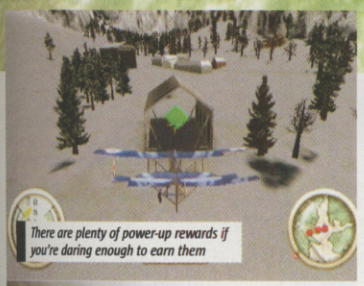
Wax up your moustache and think of England for this WWI dogfighter

Graphically it isn't the best looking Xbox title. But the non-stop action is ace

Weather and seasonal effects add to the authenticity of the missions



Yes, yes, but who's gonna fly the plane while I'm doing that?



There are plenty of power-up rewards if you're daring enough to earn them

Ultimately, keeping airborne is the biggest challenge!

These days it's first-person shooters a-go-go on the Xbox, so a First World War shooter set in the skies above Europe makes a pleasant change.

Wings Of War is a fair stab at recreating dogfighting action, putting you in the seat of an aerial ace battling for supremacy of the skies. Surprisingly, this is also a decent mix of simulation and arcade action, sitting somewhere between the two. So you don't feel like the action is on rails, yet you don't need to read a fat instruction manual to pick up and play either.

The game is split into two sections with a lengthy Campaign Mode made up of a massive 70 missions. Or if you want some instant action, there's a dogfighting deathmatch arena that feels tough to begin with, but a nice learning curve means you'll soon be chalking up kills on the side of your cockpit.

The only serious disappointment is the lack of any multiplayer action. You'll soon learn to anticipate the actions of the computer opponents, so some Live support or offline multiplayer would have gone down a treat.

Without it, this is still a decent little shooter that offers old-fashioned action, both in the period detailing and also the simplicity of the controls. Still, for the bargain £20 price, you could do a lot worse with your money.

PREVIOUS GAMES
- None. Nowt. Nothing

HARD FACTS
- 70 missions
- Seven European maps
- 25 flyable planes
- Win medals for kills and successful missions
- Coming to PC soon

DID YOU KNOW?
- Famous WWI dogfighter the Sopwith Camel came into action in 1917 and soon gained a reputation as a deadly trench-strafed. It had a 130hp engine. We've seen lawnmowers with more power.

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS 68
Somewhat disappointing for Xbox but they do the job adequately

SOUND 73
Heroic orchestral score with lots of whizzing bullers and buzzing propellers. Ace stuff

GAMEPLAY 78
Easy to pick up and play, nice learning curve and good mix of missions and dogfights

LASTING APPEAL 75
Loads of missions if you stick with it. Shame the instant fight mode wasn't multiplayer

Won't float everyone's boat, or fly their plane even, but this is a fun little shooter full of action that offers plenty of bang and bought farms for your buck.

OVERALL SCORE 76

HOW IT COMPARES
CRIMSON SKIES
WINGS OF WAR
ACE COMBAT 4

REVIEWS ROUND-UP

THE REST OF THE REVIEWS WE COULDN'T FIT IN, EVEN AFTER APPLYING PLENTY OF KY AND LIBERAL USE OF A PLUNGER

What have end of level bosses got against little people?

MEGAMAN ZERO 3

OUT: SEPTEMBER 3 ✷ COST: £29.99 ✷ PLAYERS: 1

The hardest working character in gaming returns with another frantic platformer.

This one plays like a junior version of the Castlevania series, with MM able to upgrade his circuitry to change his abilities, use weapons from defeated bosses and fuse items together. Almost mega!

72

Megaman reacted badly to another crap Kinder Surprise toy

Megaman fits some panto into his busy schedule. Oh no he doesn't...

Megaman failed to impress with his robot dance

MEGAMAN BATTLE NETWORK 4 RED SUN/BLUE MOON

OUT: SEP 3 ✷ COST: £29.99 ✷ PLAYERS: 1-2

More Megaman battling, with it's basic plot spread over two versions.

If you want to know the full story, you gotta buy both. Okay, so there's also different enemies and upgrades but this is for the Megaheads only.

62

The fight for the picnic benches lasted all day

COMBAT MISSION ANTHOLOGY

OUT: NOW ✷ COST: £19.99 ✷ PLAYERS: 1-2

If you're a fan of military strategy games, here's an excellent opportunity to stock up on the entire Combat Mission series.

Although the WWII series is starting to show its age and the action is considered to be pretty hardcore, this is a lot of game for your money.

73

IMPORT REVIEWS

FULLY INDEPENDENT & MULTIFORMAT ✷ TRUST NO-ONE ELSE

NICE PAIR OF SEQUELS!

Apologies for the Bite Size section this month. We were caught unawares by the arrival of official PES4 code, so our review of Winning Eleven 8 got ruthlessly binned last minute. Wowzer! No guilt for featuring two colossal sequels though, even one that appeared on Dreamcast four years ago.

If you want to know why we're still thrilled to see 3rd Strike on PS2, please go to www.shoryuken.com and download the Daigo vs Justin Wong movie. Don't all go rushing out to buy 3rd Strike, unless you're desperate to own it on PS2. It's going to be bundled with Street Fighter Anniversary Collection in October for Xbox, along with SFII through Super SFII Turbo X... and the Street Fighter animated movie. Worth waiting for I'd say.

As for Gradius, well we thought your hand-eye coordination could use a good try out – even the hardcore Gradius fan sites are saying this thing's too hard! So, to calm your nerves beforehand, here's a nice soothing picture of Elena.

Paul Davies

Paul Davies *The Import King*

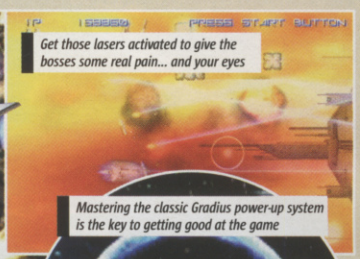
PS2

RELEASE DATE
OUT NOW

GAME INFO
IMPORT COST: £55
PLAYERS: 1-2

CONTACT INFO
✷ PUB: KONAMI
✷ DEV: TREASURE
✷ WWW.KONAMITYO.COM/GRA5

Some of the dodging you'll have to pull off to survive will have to be world class



Get those lasers activated to give the bosses some real pain... and your eyes

Mastering the classic Gradius power-up system is the key to getting good at the game

GRADIUS V

A blast from the past that's harder than granite

There was a day when shooters didn't have to be either first or third-person. Indeed there was a time when shooters had no people at all – only swarms of vicious aliens, flying across the screen from right to left, with only a single heroic space ship to disintegrate the lot of them.

The Gradius games have always been among the finest of such old-school 2D side-scrolling shoot 'em ups, tracking their roots right back to 1980's arcades. And this, friends, is one of the finest Gradiuses yet, because the guys who made it – Treasure – are the absolute best in the business.

INSANITY WILL FOLLOW!

To get an idea of the experience, get three lemons, start juggling them, sing the national anthem, and then start long dividing some large prime numbers in your head. Time spent avoiding the screenfuls of aliens, bullets and missiles here are some of the most intense minutes you'll ever spend, sending you into some weird eye-popping trance of concentration.

HURT ME HUNTER! MAKE ME BLEED!

While many will find the whole thing too demanding, too punishing, too hardcore, shoot 'em up purists will appreciate the love Treasure has injected into this latest incarnation.

It looks amazing, with spectacular effects going off all over the place, and the balance of elements old and new is spot on. Massively addictive if you can take the punishment, but probably not for those who like a bit of 3 with their D.✷

PREVIOUS GAMES
- Gunstar Heroes
- Radiant Silvergun
- Ikaruga

HARD FACTS
- 100 trillion unfriendly bullets fired in Gradius since 1985 (approx)

DID YOU KNOW?
- Gradius is more commonly known as Nemesis outside of Japan, although nothing to do with this guy...

A sight certain to stir the blood of anyone who's ever played a shoot 'em up in anger

One day, all aliens will evolve to realise that multiple eyeballs aren't the best defence

"IT'S MASSIVELY ADDICTIIVE IF YOU CAN TAKE THE PUNISHMENT"

TREASURE CHEST

Okay, so this is basically a simple, 2D, side-scrolling shooter, right?

Yeah, that's true, but those clever chappies at Treasure are renowned for graphical genius, and have filled Gradius V full of peeper-pleasing pyrotechnic pleasure.

1 ■ *While you're blatting aliens in the foreground, the structures in the background are slowly rotating*

2 ■ *When this boss gets totalled, it floats off into space and explodes, showcasing Treasure's awesome 2D/3D powers*

3 ■ *There are also intermittent cutscenes full of spectacular visuals to give you time to catch your breath mid-carnage*

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS 89
The 3D effects are stunning, and no slow-down even when all hell's breaking loose

SOUND 78
Plenty of arcades-style noise, plus some decent, pumping techno gubbins

GAMEPLAY 89
Okay, so it's not exactly original, but it's a tried-and-tested formula

LASTING APPEAL 82
It takes a special type of person to keep coming back for more, but many do

It's hard going on sadistic, but as good an old-skool shooter as you can get. Don't buy it now and you may regret it when it's deleted and £120 on eBay.

OVERALL SCORE 87

HOW IT COMPARES
ADVANCE WARS 2
FRONT MISSION 4
DISGAEA

STREET FIGHTER III: 3RD STRIKE

Essential and a steal at roughly 20 quid on import!

3rd Strike is the Donnie Darko of 2D fighting – you must discover it again to appreciate the genius. Donnie Darko played to cinemas without much celebration, but on DVD it's a classic.

Having struggled to start a fire in the arcades, 3rd Strike stood the test of time and is now entrenched as one of the world's top tournament fighters. Sensing an opportunity, Capcom has made the definitive home version.

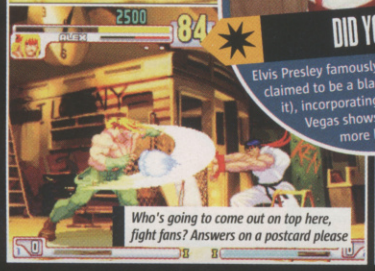
We're going to say this is arcade perfect. Unless you want to argue differences between CP-System III and PS2 all night, this is SFII: 3rd Strike to the last pixel. For PS2 (and soon also for Xbox), Capcom allows us to toggle various gameplay parameters on or off, mostly to affect the level of parrying involved and the timing. Although the whole point of 3rd Strike is that Capcom finally nailed a formula to guarantee long-lasting credibility, being able to omit stuff like air parrying is there to convince stuck-in-the-mud – nay fossilised – SSFIITX die-hards that 3rd Strike is cool.

"UNLESS YOU WANT TO ARGUE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CP-SYSTEM III AND PS2 ALL NIGHT, THIS IS SFIII: 3RD STRIKE TO THE LAST PIXEL"

Q is our least favourite character, so we could enjoy looking at this screenshot all day

DID YOU KNOW?

Elvis Presley famously loved Karate. He claimed to be a black belt (we doubt it), incorporating moves into his Vegas shows. Fat belt, more like.



Who's going to come out on top here, fight fans? Answers on a postcard please

Alex deftly evades Ryu's lunge and goes to grab the young dragon by the face

YOU READ MY MIND

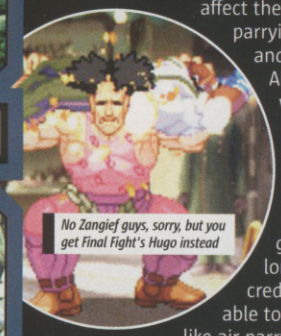
Parrying is the bravest/luckiest move you'll ever perform in a game.

It's a tap toward an opponent done the split-second their attack should connect. Timed correctly, you'll parry the blow and gain another split-second to counter-attack. Mess up, and you'll be made to look a fool of truly Grazza Boyd proportions!

1 ■ Akuma sees Oro's jumping attack a mile off, or more likely could smell it. Peeuuw!

2 ■ Opponents who repeatedly jump in to start their lame-ass combos are easily parried

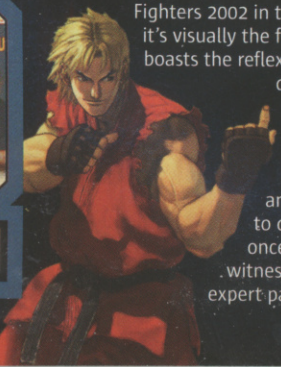
3 ■ Ken paries Sean's Tornado Kick, but not all Super Arts are as easy to see coming



No Zangief guys, sorry, but you get Final Fight's Hugo instead

HOLD ONTO YOUR HADOKENS

Although 3rd Strike is not the best overall 2D fighter (we still hold King Of Fighters 2002 in that regard), it's visually the finest, and boasts the reflex-busting drama of parrying. All 19 characters have animations to die for, and once you've witnessed an expert parry the erratic bursts of energy from a Chun-Li 'super' you should be convinced that there are depths to 3rd Strike that let you feel the heat off the earth's core. ✷



CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS — 84
The pinnacle of 2D sprite animation, despite the offbeat offerings in Guilty Gear

SOUND — 80
Choose Original or Arrange soundtracks, but neither boast especially classic tunes

GAMEPLAY — 79
Enjoyable at any level because of its varied characters, and the depth is amazing!

LASTING APPEAL — 78
You'll never tire of 3rd Strike because it's so deep, but other fighters demand attention

Every fighting fanatic should own it, but you may want to wait until October when it's bundled with the UK release of Anniversary Collection on Xbox.

OVERALL SCORE 93

HOW IT COMPARES
GUILTY GEAR X2
SFIII 3RD STIKE
KOF 2002

JAPANESE RELEASE DATES

PLAYSTATION 2

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
26.8	Monochrome	Kid
	Taiko Risshiden V	Koei
	Full Metal Alchemist Dream Carnival	Bandai
	Clover Hearts Looking for Happiness	Interchannel
	Spider-Man 2	Taito
	Zwei!!	Taito
	Virtua Fighter Cyber Generation	Sega
	Bloodline	EA
	Assault Suits Valken	Messiah
2.9	Romance of the Three Kingdoms IX	Koei
	GhostHunter	SCE
	Run Like Hell	Capcom
	Let's Go Wherever With Toro	SCE
9.9	Konohana 4	Success
	Tokyo University Shoigi Compilation	Mainichi Communication
	Dororo	Sega
	Biohazard Outbreak FILE 2	Capcom
	First Love Tastes Like Strawberry	Peony Soft
	Viewtiful Joe	Capcom
	Broken Sword: Legend of the Sleeping Dragon	Marvellous Interactive
	Van Helsing	Vivendi Universal
16.9	Yamashiro Mahjong Collection	Taito
	Shin Megami Tensei	Atlus
	Dynasty Warriors Premium Pack	Koei
	Angelique Etoile	Koei
	Spectral Force Logical Elements	Idea Factory
	Prince of Tennis	Konami
	Final Fantasy XI Promathia Data Disc	Square-Enix
	Pro Baseball Spirits 2004 Climax	Konami
22.9	Apocripha/0	GN Software
	Double Reaction! PLUS	Datam Polistar
	Formula One 2004	SCE
	Great Sword 3	Genki
	Alchemist Master 2: Red Elixir	Square-Enix
	Sakura Taisen V Episode 0	Sega
	Tales of Symphonia	Namco
	Meine Liebe: Elegant Memories	Konami
	Metal Slug 4	SNK Playmore
	Rakaguki Kingdom 2	Taito
30.9	DESIRE	Interchannel
	Love Songs ADV	D3 Publisher
	NARUTO Narutimet Hero 2	Bandai
	W Wish	Princess Soft
	Assault Armoured Force Attack Helicopter	Taito
	RAIN Sukisyo! Episode #3	Interchannel
	Ys III Wonders From Ys	Taito
	Keroro Sergeant MeroMero Battle Royale	Bandai
	Slotter Up Core 4 Ton-chan	Doratto
	Fantastic Fortune 2 Triple Star	Gen-X
	Princess Maker 2	Gen-X
	Magna Carta	Banpresto

XBOX

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
2.9	Dead Man's Hand	Microsoft
	Star Wars Jedi Knight: Jedi Academy	Microsoft
22.9	SNK VS CAPCOM SVC CHAOS	SNK Playmore
23.9	Phantom Dust	Microsoft
30.9	Full Spectrum Warrior	Microsoft

GAMECUBE

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
26.8	Virtua Fighter Cyber Generation	Sega

GBA

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
26.8	Crash Bandicoot Nitro Cart	Konami
	Bo-Bo-Boh Boh-Bo-Bo Blast Fighting	Hudson
16.9	Pokemon Emerald	Nintendo
22.9	Advance Guardian Heroes	Sega

AMERICAN RELEASE DATES

PLAYSTATION 2

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
30.8	Gallop Racer 2004	Tecmo
31.8	Cabela's Deer Hunt: 2005 Season	Activision
	Carmen Sandiego: The Secret of the Stolen Drums	BAM! Entertainment
	ESPN NHL 2K5	Sega
	NASCAR 2005: Chase for the Cup	EA
	Phantom Brave	Nippon Ichi Software
	Rapala Pro Fishing	Activision
	Spy Fiction	Sammy Studios
	Star Ocean: Till the End of Time	Square-Enix
	Street Fighter Anniversary Collection	Capcom
	Street Racing Syndicate	Namco
1.9	Growlanser Generations	Working Designs
	Superbikes TT	XS Games
6.9	Juiced	Acclaim
7.9	Asterix and Obelix	Atari
	Digimon Rumble Arena 2	Bandai
	Fairly Odd Parents: Shadow Showdown	THQ
	Silent Hill 4: The Room	Konami
	Technic Beat	Mastiff
8.9	Burnout 3	EA
13.9	Jimmy Neutron: Attack of the Twonkies	THQ
14.9	Bad Boys: Miami Takedown	Empire Interactive
	Demon Stone	Atari
	Dynasty Warriors 4: Empires	Koei
	FlatOut	Empire Interactive
	Gradius V	Konami
	Katamari Damacy	Namco
	King of Fighters: Maximum Impact	SNK NeoGeo
	NHL 2005	EA
	Power Rangers: Dino Thunder	THQ
	ShellShock: Nam '67	Eidos Interactive
	Sly 2: Band of Thieves	SCEA

NEXT MONTH

We told you Namco Japan's literally oddball Katamari Damacy was great. Well, KD launches Stateside next month, proving that you miss this section of CVG at your peril. More predictable fare next issue though, with a look at a US version of Star Ocean: Till the End of Time for PS2, plus Pokemon Emerald on JP GBA SP. Meantime, we're getting back to our SFIII. TTFN.

LOG ON AND LOAD UP

Still hungry for more, even after thumbing through this game-packed issue of CVG? Logging onto **ComputerAndVideogames.com** will satisfy the biggest gaming appetites

HOTTEST GAMING NEWS

ComputerAndVideogames.com is Europe's leading online news service covering games on a global scale. Any self-respecting games fan simply cannot afford to miss the latest developments on PS2, Xbox, Game Boy Advance, GameCube and PC from around the world. There's only one place to keep up and that's here. CVG's news is an essential part of your daily routine.

ESSENTIAL TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS

CheatStation is one of the biggest sources of gaming tips, cheats and guides on the Internet, supplying 37,558 cheats for 8877 games on 40 formats. Features such as being able to vote on any cheat make ComputerAndVideogames.com's service the best in the world. There's absolutely no need to go anywhere else.

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Fact: the best online competition prizes around are to be found on ComputerAndVideogames.com. Consoles, games, TVs and everything else you could ever need to make your gaming life a luxury fly out of our hands faster than you can say, "I need free stuff". Don't be a mug: you've got to be in it to win it.

ON INFO!

IT'S GOOD TO TALK

There's no better place on the Web to meet like-minded people than on our forums. Feel the need to spout on about your passion? We have bulletin boards for PS2, Xbox, GameCube, Game Boy Advance, PC, Mac, PSone, Dreamcast, N64, music and film, cheats, our online ranking service CSports.net and a general place to talk games. Join the party right now!

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COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES CVG

Big 50!

Only the best and biggest games make it into our Big 50. Don't fancy any of this month's reviews? One of these'll please you – guaranteed!

FAR CRY 91%

■ PC ■ Ubisoft ■ £39.99

The FPS equivalent of a back-packer holiday... with the Sex Pistols. The freedom to wander where you want, when you want across lush tropical islands and diving into beautiful blue seas – only instead of dodging crazed out hippies trying to flog you dope, this has you escaping merciless mercs and mad mutants hell-bent on blasting head-sized holes in your hapless hide.

CIVILIZATION III 90%

■ PC ■ Atari ■ £9.99 (Conquest add-on £19.99)

Better than history lessons taught by a page 3 girl, re-write history as it should've been – with YOU in charge. Strategy-wise, it's as deep as it gets.

DISGAEA 88%

■ PS2 ■ Koei ■ £39.99

Ugly and grim sounding yet incredibly well endowed in the gameplay department, this is to console strategy games what Wayne Rooney is to footie.

FIGHT NIGHT 2004 89%

■ PS2, Xbox ■ EA ■ £39.99

We expect polished, big licence games from EA, but analog stick punch control is a revelation that'll get more ripped off than a Yank tourist in Soho.

FINAL FANTASY X 88%

■ PS2 ■ Sony ■ £19.99

The first FF for PS2 was a Choco-fanciers wet-dream. Massive and absorbing, the purer levelling up and skills system kicks over-drives up X-2's ass.

007 EVERYTHING OR NOTHING 83%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ EA ■ £39.99

EA must love pain, 'cos every year it does a Bond game and every year someone disses it for not being as good as GoldenEye. Same this year, only it really isn't that far off. No, honestly.

ADVANCE WARS 2: BLACK HOLE RISING 91%

■ GBA ■ Nintendo ■ £29.99

Proof that strategy games aren't for speccy twats called DarthMaul897364. Advance Wars 2 is addictive, challenging and... uh-oh, the F word... fun!

BOKTAI 85%

■ GBA ■ Konami ■ £29.99

Innovative vamp-twatter weaving a light-sensitive gizmo on your GBA cart into the gameplay. Meaning you'll need to play it OUTDOORS. Gasp! No!

BURNOUT 2: POINT OF IMPACT 91%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ Acclaim ■ £19.99 - 39.99

For people that love driving VERY FAST, this is a gift from the gods. No-frills, balls-out, unadulterated arcade racing with wicked pile-ups. Still ace a year on.

FIRE EMBLEM 85%

■ GBA ■ Nintendo ■ £29.99

When battle strategy and role-playing meet, you know the unholy bastard hellspawn of Beelzebub is so addictive it's going to take over your waking life.

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR 92%

■ Xbox ■ THQ ■ £39.99

Soldiering sim that's more real-time strategiser than squad-based shooter. Intense, rewarding and wicked-looking.

F-ZERO GP LEGEND 91%

■ GBA ■ Nintendo ■ £29.99

Old skool looks hide heart-pumpingly tight racing action, complete with new ship tuning and Story Mode options. A real pocket rocket must-have.

F-ZERO GX 91%

■ GameCube ■ Nintendo ■ £39.99

Frantically fast futuristic racer that proves Cube packs some processing punch. It won't make that carry-handle look any less stupid though.

GALLEON 92%

■ Xbox ■ SCi ■ £39.99

Unmissable adventure classic that took a billion years to make. Neat game engine, mental levels, crafty puzzles and class voice acting? Whoop!

GRAND THEFT AUTO DOUBLE PACK 95%

■ PS2, XBOX ■ Rockstar ■ £39.99

Two classics for the price of one, GTA lets you loose in a concrete jungle where anything goes, so long as it's on the wrong side of the law. Slick!

HALO 95%

■ Xbox, PC ■ Microsoft ■ £19.99

Sci-fi shooter that sold the system, two years on and many console shooters are still struggling to come up to par. Worth owning an Xbox just to play.

MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH!! 86%

■ GameCube ■ Nintendo ■ £39.99

Closer to the N64 than the beloved SNES version, DD tries to be a crowd-pleaser but some players hate its kiddier karts and stretched-out tracks.

PSI-OPS 87%

■ Xbox, PS2 ■ Midway ■ £39.99

If those blokes at Midway know so much about psionic skills, how come they haven't developed the power of foresight? Maybe then they'd have made sure that they didn't release it at the same time as Codies' separated-at-birth title, Second Sight. Psi-Ops is more arcadey and all the better for it, we reckon, but Codies baby has stolen some of its thunder. Shame.

SPIDER-MAN 2 84%

■ Xbox, PS2, GC, PC ■ Activision ■ £39.99

Every arachnid nut's filthiest-ever wet dream. Gameplay is essentially Grand Theft Arachno, with lumps of Spidey's new movie thrown into an industrial blender along side large chunks of New York and GTA-style open-ended gameplay.

If you're fed up with following the movie-based missions (not to mention the rubbish cutscenes), a couple of flicks of the wrist and your sticky stuff will get you swinging wherever you want, free to pick up assorted suitable superhero tasks, wracking up Hero points to upgrade your skillz and massage your ego.

MARIO SUNSHINE 92%

■ GameCube ■ Nintendo ■ £19.99

Reinvented platform action thanks to the Ron Jeremy look-alike's new backpack. More magical moments than David Blaine's shazam hands.

METROID PRIME 93%

■ GameCube ■ Nintendo ■ £19.99

Classic platformer melded with first-person shooter into a totally unique-feeling actioner that's perfectly paced, heavily atmospheric and hard!

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE 81%

■ PS2, Xbox, PC ■ Konami ■ £39.99

Sons Of Liberty gets a remix. Now with more Snake and less of that albino fop. Makes you wonder why they didn't do it right the first time. Helped define the stealth genre, but the plot is quite nuts.

METAL GEAR SOLID: TWIN SNAKES 89%

■ GC ■ Konami ■ £39.99

Snake has snuffed Sons Of Liberty, stolen it's clothes and stuffed the limp corpse of its plot into a foot-locker, time-warping back to his PSone classic.

NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND 91%

■ PS2, Xbox, PC, GameCube ■ EA ■ £39.99

A blinding racer for anyone that loves attaching spinning rims and kitting their motor out with a booming sound system. Everyone, then!

NINJA GAIDEN 93%

■ Xbox ■ Microsoft ■ £39.99

Vast and constantly surprising hack 'em up that's longer and harder than an XL concrete condom. No-skillz gamers need not apply.

THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK 83%

Xbox ■ Vivendi Universal ■ £39.99

Vivendi's ice-cool, follicley challenged anti-hero gives us the videogame equivalent of a summer blockbuster movie – a gripping, action-packed experience, but you'll only go there once and within two weeks you'll have forgotten what all the fuss was about.

Scenarios play out similarly to MGS or Splinter Cell, though with less emphasis on stealth, leaving you the option to go gung-ho. Also boasts high levels of graphical detail and high production Hollywood sound effects and orchestral score.

THE BALD DESTROYER DONE GOOD ON HIS XBOX DEBUT, THOUGH IT'S NOT WITHOUT ITS FAULTS

ONIMUSHA 3 93%

PS2 ■ Capcom ■ £39.99

Stunning visuals, atmospheric score, slick new features, time-bending plot and old Jean Reno himself make this a bloody cut above 1 & 2.

POKEMON COLOSSEUM 90%

GameCube ■ Nintendo ■ £39.99

Half the planet's gamers want to see the little critters crucified then skinned alive, but the rest will love the new mix of scrapping and adventuring.

PRINCE OF PERSIA: SANDS OF TIME 89%

PS2, Xbox, GameCube, PC ■ Ubisoft ■ £39.99

Ace platformer that likes to get all Craig David with a fancy "Can I get a rewind?" time-travel feature.Looks luverly, but a bit short and buggy too.

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3 95%

PS2, PC ■ Konami ■ £39.99

Best football game on the planet. What more do you want us to say? Oh yeah... no real players. Well, we've all gotta have some dreams, right?

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 2 93%

Xbox ■ Microsoft ■ £39.99

Street racing thrills in sumptuous looking cities with awesome Xbox Live support too. Bit of a slow-burner till you've got some cool cars.

RAINBOW SIX 3 84%

PS2, Xbox ■ UbiSoft ■ £39.99

Great squad-based tactical shooter that feels more realistic than other games in this arena. You'll look a twat wearing that headset to talk to people though. PS2's outing is the weakest, too.

RALLISPORT CHALLENGE 2 90%

Xbox ■ Microsoft ■ £39.99

Forget the boring techie shite, the emphasis here is on getting behind the wheel and enjoying belting along bumpy roads at insane speeds.

RED DEAD REVOLVER 85%

Xbox, PS2 ■ Sony ■ £39.99

Rockstar lays on the style and does the impossible – making a decent game set in the Wild West. Original ideas with fresh and fast action.

SOULCALIBUR 2 88%

PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ EA/Nintendo ■ £39.99

Looks great but weak AI makes one-player too easy and the fighting system just isn't deep enough to last in multiplayer. We prefer Virtua Fighter.

SPLINTER CELL PANDORA TOMORROW 94%

Xbox, PC, PS2 ■ Ubisoft ■ £39.99

Sam slaps on his night-perving goggles and pokes his optic cable into loads more crevices in this stealth sequel masterpiece.Genius multiplayer.

SSX 3 85%

PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ EA ■ £39.99

The ultimate boarding thrill-ride, SSX 3 is more open-ended as you wrack up the points exploring three huge mountains looking for the phattest air.

STAR WARS: KOTOR 88%

Xbox, PC ■ Activision ■ £39.99

Star Wars gets a AAA game, with cool weapons and skills plus a genius fighting system. More fun than waxing a wookie – but just as beardy.

THIEF 3 89%

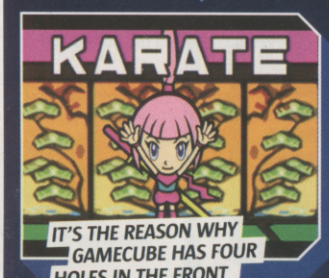
Xbox, PC ■ Eidos ■ £39.99

Medieval sneakage for anyone sick of the usual hi-tech terrorism settings. Simple game mechanics hide great freedom and depth.

WARIO WARE MEGA PARTY GAMES 84%

GC ■ Nintendo ■ £19.99

The ultimate party videogame, nothing in the world is funnier than playing four-way Wario Ware. Same three-second challenges as per the GBA Wario Ware and same one-player game, but the all-new four-player full-screen games are hilarious. And it's only £20.



IT'S THE REASON WHY GAMECUBE HAS FOUR HOLES IN THE FRONT

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004 89%

PS2, Xbox, GameCube, PC ■ EA Sports ■ £39.99

Someone should have told Siegfried and Roy that there are easier ways to tame a tiger. This is the Gran Turismo of golf games – it's that good!

TIMESPLITTERS 2 91%

PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ Eidos ■ £19.99

Comedy time-travelling shooter with great levels and wicked multiplayer modes. If you loved GoldenEye on N64, snap this up.

TOCA RACE DRIVER 2 91%

Xbox, PC ■ Codemasters ■ £39.99

So many different types of racing in one perfectly polished package that feel genuinely different and all genuinely good. A real must-have.

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 79%

PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ Activision ■ £39.99

The weakest game in the series, but Tony's still the chairman of the board when it comes to skating on your console. Made us wish Jackass' Bam Margera would do his own videogame.

TOP SPIN 83%

Xbox ■ Microsoft ■ £39.99

"Anyone that says Virtua Tennis is better cannot be serious. Wedge a racket up their ass and make them play this, that'll learn 'em real good". A direct quote from CVG's Grazza, no less.

VIEWTIFUL JOE 89%

GameCube ■ Capcom ■ £39.99

A kung-fu fighting superhero crimefighter with more Bullet Time tricks than the whole Matrix trilogy. Crazy, unique and very cool – viewtiful even!

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4 EVOLUTION 93%

PS2 ■ Sega ■ £39.99

Tekken 4? Parp! Virtua Fighter 4 is where the big boys play. This is the current pinnacle of 3D beat 'em ups. Just a pity Akira looks like Peter Andre.

WARIO WARE INC. 88%

GBA ■ Nintendo ■ £29.99

Mini-game nirvana in one of the smartest, most devious and addictive games ever. The pleasure of slicing steaks and picking noses is intense, but over too soon.

WWE SMACKDOWN! HCTP 87%

PS2 ■ THQ ■ £39.99

The series gets bigger and better each year and now you can play Bra and Panties matches avec the laydeez – it's the best wrestling game ever!

LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER 95%

GameCube ■ Nintendo ■ £39.99

Absorbing graphics and captivating gameplay, mini Orlando Bloom Link will pull you in faster than Jordan's yo-yo knickers go up and down.

Do you agree with CVG? If you think there's something missing, write it and let us know.

mailbag.cvg@dennis.co.uk

NEW ENTRIES

SPIDER-MAN 2
This month we've been getting all sticky over Treyarch's fusion of summer blockbuster movie and GTA-style open-ended gaming.

CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK
Not only are baldie boy's new movie and game pretty hot, but we love that he takes games so seriously he's got his own dev studio. Respect.

PSI-OPS
Like twin Yodas locked in mental battle, only 1% separates this and Second Sight. But if there can only be one in your collection, make this it.

DROP-OUTS

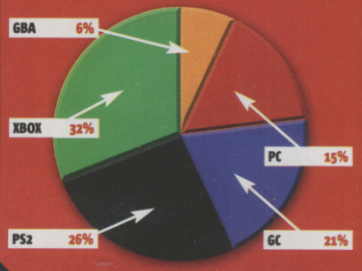
CHAMP MAN 03-04
Still great but we're waiting to see who roolz the league now Eidos and SI are going head to head.

EUFA EURO 2004
It's all sooo last month. And besides, we're way too busy pissing ourselves about upcoming PES4.

MASHED
Fun for a bit, especially in multiplayer, but the shine just wore off Mashed's finish.

FORMAT FACE-OFF

It took Xbox two years to bag the top format slot, and it's slowly opening the gap. Here's the latest breakdown...



BEST AND WORST OF THE LAST 3 MONTHS

Missed an issue of CVG and want to know what the reviews highlights and lowlights were? Here you go...

ZELDA FOUR SWORDS ADVENTURE	
GC (IMPORT)	92%
SOLDIERS: HEROES OF WWII	
PC	88%
KIRBY AND THE AMAZING MIRROR	
GC	83%
CATWOMAN	
PS2, XBOX, GC, PC	62%
ARMY MEN SARGE'S WAR	
PS2, XBOX, PC	39%

GROUND CONTROL II	
PC	85%
SHELLSHOCK NAM '67	
PS2, XBOX, PC	71%
DRIV3R	
PS2, XBOX	64%
ATHENS 2004	
PS2	61%
FORMULA ONE 2004	
PS2	51%

ONIMUSHA 3 DEMON SIEGE	
PS2	93%
PSO III	
GC	78%
.HACK: MUTATION	
PS2	76%
SYPHON FILTER: THE OMEGA STRAIN	
PS2	72%
X-FILES: RESIST OR SERVE	
PS2, XBOX	63%

NURSE CVG'S BIG TIPS

Welcome to The Surgery! Polish up those tips and come inside – Nurse CVG's flung herself open for consultation!

Phew! It's been a scorcher here in The Surgery this month! Thankfully, all the local boys have been very thoughtful and keep coming round to offer their services. My office has been stuffed full of strapping young lads all blowing softly on my titbits to try and keep them cool. And I know it's not just me who's been suffering either! You poor things have been lining up to hand over your tips and – boy! Do they feel sticky once I've got them in my fingers!

You might remember Duane, the work experience boy I had in last month. Well, what with all this heat, I managed to nod off during one of our quieter moments – and what do I find when I wake up? Duane rummaging around inside my drawers, trying to cop of feel of my star tip! I'm afraid I had to let him go. I'm not a violent lady, but I sure did show him what for with my fist before he left the building!

Anyway, my tips are safe and sound, stuffed firmly back where they belong – on these pages, for you, dear reader. Don't forget, I love getting my hands on your meaty morsels so keep 'em coming in and I'll tease the cream of the crop out ready for next month!

Lots of sweaty love, Nurse CVG xxx

MARIO GOLF: ADVANCE TOUR

GBA

Whenever my plumbing needs a right good seeing to, there's nothing like a long session with Mario to cleanse my pipes. Best of all, whenever I'm yearning for the moustachioed maestro to swing his heaving club in my direction and sink a few balls into my hole, I just need to whip the little golfing rascal out of my pocket now.

UNLOCKABLE GBA CHARACTERS

✷ *AZALEA*
Defeat her in Match Play
✷ *JOE*
Defeat him in Match Play
✷ *KID*
Defeat her in Match Play
✷ *SHERRY*
Defeat her in Match Play
✷ *GENE*
Defeat his team in Match Play
✷ *GRACE*
Defeat her team in Match Play
✷ *PUTTS*
Defeat his team in Match Play
✷ *TINY*
Defeat his team in Match Play

UNLOCKABLE GC CHARACTERS

You'll need to link up your GBA to Mario Golf: Toadstool Tour on the Cube to reap these secret characters:

✷ *WARIO*
Transfer 54 Birdie Badges
✷ *BOWSER*
Transfer 81 Birdie Badges
✷ *WALUIGI*
Get 27 Best Badges

NURSE CVG'S TIP OF THE MONTH

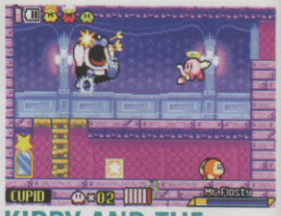
PSI-OPS: THE MINDGATE CONSPIRACY

PS2, XBOX

I've been having funny dreams recently, so I decided to go see a shrink for the once-over. It made me think – most of my boyfriends seem to think that I'm a qualified psychologist or something. I can't work out why else they'd go around telling all their mates that I'm a head specialist otherwise.

Go to Extra Content in the main menu, press R1 and enter these codes to unlock extra missions and modes:

✷ Arcade Mode 05051979
✷ Co-op Mode 07041979
✷ Dark Mode 465486
✷ Survival Mode 7734206
✷ Aura Pool 659785
✷ Bottomless Pit 154897
✷ Bouncy Bouncy 568789
✷ Gasoline 9442662
✷ Gear Gauntlet 154684
✷ Gnomotron 456878
✷ Panic Room 76635766
✷ Pitfall 05120926
✷ Psi Pool 565485
✷ Stop Lights 945678
✷ Tip The Idol 428584
✷ TK Alley 090702
✷ Up And Over 020615



KIRBY AND THE AMAZING MIRROR

GBA

I'm no stranger to sucking pink things so I thought this would be right up my street. Trouble is, it's far too lengthy for my liking and I'm having trouble fitting it all into my tight schedule. These tips should bring some light relief though, if you're struggling to accommodate everything in one sitting.

✷ *USE METAKNIGHT'S SWORD*
Defeat the final bosses
✷ *DIFFERENT COLOURED KIRBYS*
Locate the Spray Paint cans throughout the game
✷ *UNLOCK THE POWER CENTRE*
Locate and press all the Portal Switches throughout the game
✷ *BOSS RUSH MODE*
Available from the main menu once you get 100 per cent on a file
✷ *SOUND TEST*
Locate the CD Treasure and unlock tunes with any Musical Scores you find

ARMY MEN: SARGE'S WAR

PS2, XBOX, GC

Ugh, there's nothing worse than peeling a pair of cacky pants off the shrivelled heiny of some blue-rinsed bint whenever they dodder over here. Oh, what? khaki pants? Mmm, I love a man in uniform, me...

✷ *ALL WEAPONS*
Left, X, X, Y, X
✷ *UNLOCK BEAGLE HOLES, FOOTPRINTS AND BURNS SLOW MOTION*
Left, Down, Up, Right, X
Down, Up, X, Y, X
✷ *ALTERNATE LIGHTING*
Up, Right, Up, Down, X

CATWOMAN

PS2, XBOX, GC

Sure, I've stroked my fair share of pussies, but I do prefer the canine route. Pop into the surgery some time and I'll let you see my puppies.

✷ *UNLOCK ADDITIONAL GALLERY ITEMS*
Enter '1940' on the Vault Code screen

NURSE CVG'S GOLDEN TIPS

When I first slipped on my PVC outfit down at St Brenda's Home for the wee-drenched Infirm, the only crinkly old tips I could get my hands on were the ones that surfaced during sponge bath time. Now I'm at the Surgery though, I've got Nurse Gertrude working under me and beavering away to extract the finest geriatric gaming tips from my stash. Okay, she might have a handlebar moustache growing on her top lip and the most enormous shopping basket anyone's ever seen, but believe you me – she still knows how to tickle your fancy!

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

PS2, XBOX, GC

I dated a skater boy once and I just couldn't keep my hands off his helmet. Thankfully, he was good enough to pick me up some protective clothing – you wouldn't believe how often I graze my knees! Enter these codes on the options screen for some extra boarding fun...

✳ *UNLOCK MOON GRAVITY*
getitup
✳ *UNLOCK PERFECT MANUALS*
keepitsteady
✳ *UNLOCK PERFECT RAIL BALANCE*
letitslide
✳ *UNLOCK PERFECT SKITCH*
rearrider

TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA

PS2, XBOX, GC

I ask you, how was I to know that a police car would drive past at the exact same moment I bent over to buckle my boots on that street corner? Still, I've always liked a man that knows how to use a pair of handcuffs – and he was certainly very professional.

GO TO THE MAP SCREEN AND ENTER THE FOLLOWING CODES:

✳ *UNLOCK ALL DRIVING SKILLS*
Left, Right, Left, Right, A
✳ *UNLOCK ALL GUNPLAY SKILLS*
Right, Left, Right, Left, A
✳ *UNLOCK ALL FIGHTING SKILLS*
Up, Down, Up, Down, A

Enter one of these as your licence plate name and hold down L and R to confirm – you'll start the game as a different character!

✳ *PLAY AS A GANGSTER*
TFAN
✳ *PLAY AS A DONKEY*
JASS
✳ *PLAY AS A PUNK*
MNKY
✳ *PLAY AS A PIMP*
P1MP
✳ *PLAY AS A BOXER*
BRUZ

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING

PS2, XBOX, GC

Okay, so the video definitely featured two well-oiled muscle men pounding each other in the ring, but it wasn't the boxing highlights I was expecting when I picked this off the shelf over at Uncle Quentin's house the other night.

PS2

Pause the game and hold down the shoulder buttons to enter these codes:

✳ *UNLOCK PIPPIN*
Triangle, Circle, Square, Down
✳ *UNLOCK FARAMIR*
X, X, Triangle, Triangle
✳ *UNLOCK MERRY*
X, Down, Down, X
✳ *1000 EXP POINT FOR ARAGORN*
Up, Square, Triangle, X
✳ *1000 EXP POINT FOR SAM*
Triangle, X, Down, X
✳ *1000 EXP POINT FOR LEGOLAS*
X, Triangle, Up, X
✳ *1000 EXP POINT FOR FRODO*
Up, Triangle, Up, Down
✳ *1000 EXP POINT FOR GANDALF*
Circle, Triangle, Up, Down
✳ *1000 EXP POINT FOR GIMLI*
Circle, Circle, Triangle, X

HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS

PS2, XBOX, GC

Hermione, darling, you should be concentrating on your studies at the moment. There's plenty of time to let Potter wave his wand around your Chamber Of Secrets later. Trust me, I'm a nurse.

PS2

✳ *UNLOCK NIMBUS 2000 BROOMSTICK*
Get a B rank or above at Quidditch practice on the second day of school
✳ *UNLIMITED HOUSE POINTS*
To win the House Cup without breaking a sweat, complete the Incendio Challenge and talk to Ron. Save the game, quit and restart to receive 40 more house points. You can do this until you've had all the points you can handle.

CRASH NITRO KART

PS2, XBOX, GC, GBA

There's nothing better than having something big and hairy steaming along your track at high speeds. Unlock these extra courses and keep the critter at it all night!

✳ *TERRA DOME ARENA*
Collect all Purple tokens in Adventure Mode
✳ *HYPER SPACEWAY ARENA*
Come first place in all 16 races in Adventure Mode

TOP 20 TIPS

EVERY BEST-SELLER TIPPED!

1 SPIDER-MAN 2

PS2, XBOX, GC

The number of times I've prowled the moonlit city streets and gotten sticky white fluid all over the place, you'd think I was Spider-Man too. Start a new game with the name 'HCRAYERT' for a whopping 21,000 Hero points from the off.

2 DRIV3R

PS2, XBOX

Grip your gearstick tightly in your fist and work it feverishly across all the unlocked missions by entering L1, R1, L1, L2, Square, Square, Circle in the PS2 version.

3 SHREK 2

PS2, XBOX, PC

Roll back the sheath on the little bald guy by entering Left, Up, X, Circle, Left, Up, X, Circle, Left, Up, X, Circle, Up, Up, Up, Up, Up on the scrapbook screen for a Level Select on PS2.

4 ATHENS 2004

PS2

The last time I saw five glistening rings all joined in the name of human endeavour, my copy of Busty Butt Babes was jammed in the VCR. My tip? Be careful what you stick in your slot.

5 NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND

PS2, XBOX, GC

On the PS2, get your sweaty palms on the Circuit Tracks with ease by entering Down, R1, R1, R1, R2, R2, R2, Square.

6 TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW

PS2, XBOX, GC, GBA

In the pocket-sized version of Pandora, enter the code '030077C3:40' to get your mitts on eight flash grenades. It's even easier than getting me to flash my grenades!

7 FIFA 2004

PS2, XBOX, GC

Unlock the third kit for teams in the English Premiership and German Bundesliga by reaching Level 40 in your EA Bio on Xbox.

8 HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN

PS2, XBOX, GC

If you're perturbed by Potter, try pressing Up, Left, Down, Right, Black, Black, White on the main menu in the Xbox version. The added invulnerability should put the spunk back in your wand.

9 SONIC ADVANCE 3

GBA

Beat all seven special stages then press Up, R, Down, L, Right, Left on the main menu to unlock Secret Stage Mode.

10 TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004

PS2, XBOX, GC

Enter 'THEKITCHENSINK' on the password screen to unlock all courses and golfers. Then play around with your balls to your heart's content.

11 FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR

XBOX

Enter 'ha2p1py9tur5tle' at the code input screen, under options, to unlock the Official Army Version of the game. It's tough though, so be careful – not that I've ever objected to playing around with an extra hard unit.

12 ONIMUSHA 3: DEMON SIEGE

PS2

To get the good ending in the game, get all Haori for Ako. All I need to get a good ending is a loan of the surgery stirrups and an extra set of batteries.

13 SINGSTAR

PS2

Here's a handy tip: if you're having trouble reaching the high notes, get one of your mates to sneak up behind you and yank your sweaty grundies over your head. Instant soprano success!

14 FIGHT NIGHT 2004

PS2, XBOX

Highlight 'Play Now' on the Xbox and hit Left, Left, Left, Right, Right, Right, Left, A to unlock miniature fighters.

15 SONIC HEROES

PS2, XBOX, GC

Select a level in PS2 two-player mode then hold down X and Triangle – you'll start the game with metallic versions of the characters you picked!

16 RED DEAD REVOLVER

PS2, XBOX

I love a cowboy, me – those crotchless chaps make grabbing their shooters so much easier. Complete the Bounty Hunter goal on 'Fall from Grace' to unlock Invincibility.

17 HITMAN: CONTRACTS

PS2, XBOX, PC

Enter Square, Triangle, Circle, Left, Up, Right, L2, R2 on the PS2 main menu to activate Level Select.

18 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOOKER 2004

PS2, XBOX

It's about time that playing around with hefty balls in some nice deep pockets was recognised as an international sport. You want a tip? You'll have one by the time I'm done.

19 THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN

PS2, XBOX, GC, PC

To unlock all cars, go to the options screen before starting a game, hold down both Xbox triggers and enter A, B, A, B.

20 MEDAL OF HONOR: RISING SUN

PS2, XBOX, GC

Okay, so the sun's nice but there are better things to watch popping up in the morning – and since when has being bathed in SUNLIGHT been good for the skin? Unlock all GC levels by entering 'ALBINO' on the password screen.

DROP EVERYTHING AND WHIP OUT YOUR TIPS FOR NURSEY!

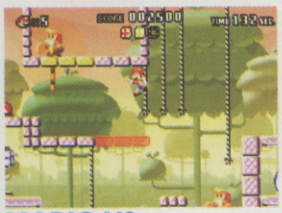
As usual, the attention you've been paying to my column this month has left me all a-quiver.

If you weren't all so keen to whip out your tips and let me give them a good going over, I wouldn't be able to give my section anywhere near as good a stuffing as I like. Take a gander and you'll see I'm rammed tighter than a pig in a warren with all the juicy morsels you've been slipping me this issue. You know me though, I'm insatiable when it comes to getting my fingers on the biggest and best tips around – keep 'em coming and I'll be sure to find a little gap somewhere to slot them in!

Love, Nurse CVG xxx

NURSE RATING 5

LIFE SAVER



MARIO VS. DONKEY KONG

GBA

Well I've been going ape over Mario's new adventure for a while now, since I picked this up on holiday. I know how much you dig the fat, furry-lipped legend, so I thought I'd chuck these juicy Donkey Kong Vs. Mario tips your way.

UNLOCK CROWN TROPHIES

- *Bronze Mario Crown*
  Get all the stars in one world
- *Silver Mario Crown*
  Get all the stars in both worlds
- *Golden Star Crown*
  Get all the presents in every Expert level

UNLOCK EXPERT LEVELS

- *LEVEL X-1*
  Collect 9 stars
- *LEVEL X-2*
  Collect 18 stars
- *LEVEL X-3*
  Collect 27 stars
- *LEVEL X-4*
  Collect 36 stars
- *LEVEL X-5*
  Collect 45 stars
- *LEVEL X-6*
  Collect 54 stars
- *LEVEL X-7*
  Collect 63 stars
- *LEVEL X-8*
  Collect 72 stars
- *LEVEL X-9*
  Collect 81 stars
- *LEVEL X-10*
  Collect 90 stars
- *LEVEL X-11 & 12*
  Get all presents in the first ten X levels

Mike, via email

***CVG** Well I never! Who'd have thought that the Italian Stallion had a donkey tucked away in his pockets? No wonder he's always on the lookout for Peach.*

DIGIMON RACING

GBA

Here's how to get your sticky fingers on the secret characters tucked away in the game:

- *VEEMON*
  Come first in Grand Prix Mode
- *AGUNIMON*
  Win the Cup Mode
- *GUILMON*
  Win the Time Trial Mode

Chris, near Bath

***CVG** I'm not sure this sounds like my cup of tea. Tiny critters driving cars about? If I'm going to let anything hairy mess around in my glove compartment, I'd like to be able to see it without a microscope.*

FRONT MISSION 4

PS2

I've been hammering away at the US version of Front Mission 4 on PS2 and managed to unlock a bunch of simulations to get through. Simply beat the levels indicated to get to grips with the new levels.

- *DURANDAL SIMULATION 1*
  Beat Stage 1: Jutland, Denmark
- *DURANDAL SIMULATION 2*
  Beat Stage 2: German Base
- *DURANDAL SIMULATION 3*
  Beat Stage 6: German Border
- *DURANDAL SIMULATION 4*
  Beat Stage 7: Blauer Nebel Castle
- *DURANDAL SIMULATION 5*
  Beat Stage 12: Zaftran Border
- *DURANDAL SIMULATION 6*
  Beat Stage 18: Megafloat Base
- *DURANDAL SIMULATION 7*
  Beat Stage 23: Zaftran Border Fortress
- *DURANDAL SIMULATION 8*
  Beat Stage 24: Zaftran Terminal
- *DURANDAL SIMULATION 9*
  Beat Stage 6: German Border in 15 turns or less
- *DURANDAL SIMULATION 10*
  Beat Durandal Simulation 6 in 25 turns or less.
- *DURANDAL SIMULATION 11*
  Beat Durandal Simulation 7 in 30 turns or less
- *DURANDAL SIMULATION 12*
  Beat Durandal Simulation 8 in 30 turns or less

Craig, via email

***CVG** The only Front Mission that's happened in the Surgery lately was when Nurse Gertrude got her flaps caught up on the stirrups. Nasty business.*

THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK: ESCAPE FROM BUTCHER BAY

XBOX

Here're some cool hints for unlocking the movie sets hidden away in the game...

- *Movie Set #1*
  Hunt out the Dog Smokes brand in Feed Ward
- *Movie Set #2*
  Search for the Black Death brand in Feed Ward
- *Movie Set #3*
  Locate Charlie's CC in Feed Ward
- *Movie Set #4*
  Discover Red Frog in Work Pass
- *Movie Set #5*
  Beat Stage 12: Zaftran Border
- *Movie Set #6*
  Find Dr Filur in Infirmary

Scott, Chester

***CVG** Every time I see a picture of Vin Diesel, I get a funny tingle in my panties. I can't tell if it's because I like a man who knows how to handle his meaty weapon though, or if I'm just partial to a glistening dome.*

SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM

PS2

Knowing how much you like having the willies put up you, I thought these terrifying Silent Hill 4 tips would be right up your dark alley. Enjoy!

- *EILEEN'S NURSE COSTUME*
  Beat the game then restart using the same save. You'll be able to get the costume from Room 303 on your third run.
- *CYNTHIA'S SPECIAL COSTUME*
  Get all four endings on one slot and start a new game. Select Eileen's nurse's uniform to unlock Cynthia's special costume.
- *CHAINSAW*
  Once you've beaten the game, save and reload. Search the Forest World and you'll find the chainsaw right beside the chopped tree trunk and car.
- *ALL WEAPONS MODE*
  Beat One Weapon Mode

Katie, Cornwall

***CVG** Believe it or not, I'm a big fan of Silent Hill – I mean, what girl wouldn't like to chased around the room by a nice pair of ghoulies wanting to go bump in the night?*

FLATLINER

WARIO WARE INC: MEGA PARTY GAMES

XBOX, PC

Me and my mates have all been working each other up into a frenzy with Wario Ware on the Cube and thought we'd share some of our discoveries with you. To unlock Character Descriptions, Hard Mode, Thrilling Mode, Movies and the Mixed Genres game, simply complete the first door. Oh, you can also access the Sound Test once you've completed every multiplayer game once.

Ben, Poole

***CVG** Not sure those cheats would have taken a rocket scientist to figure out, but at least you're right about one thing: if you're up for a good, long session then it's best to get as many people stuck in as possible.*

CVG FIRST AID KIT

Let Nurse CVG soothe your gaming pain with the gentle caress of her tips

VAN HELSING

PS2, XBOX

I've shambled along the streets of Van Helsing until my skin's gone pale and flaky and my hands are gnarled, but I still can't find any of the secrets supposedly hidden in the game. Can you save a poor boy from an eternity on the Dark Side?

James, Milton Keynes

CVG *Typical bloody action heroes, going around spoiling everyone's fun. I don't know what all the fuss is about becoming a vampire! Anyone who thinks there's something wrong with lying back and being penetrated by a massive stake until the sun comes up can't have a pulse in my book... Still, at least Van's a dab hand with a whip!*

MISSION 1

✷ *GHOST BODY*
Use the Alt Tojo blade on the marked door near the beginning of the level

✷ *BIG HEAD*
There's nothing more satisfying than a nice big head – you can have one too by checking out the back of the wagon nearby

✷ *TRANSLUCENT BODY*
Second time through the game, hit the door at the bottom of the ravine with a Gatling Gun shot

MISSION 2

✷ *GHOST FIEND*
Use the Alt Tojo blade on the door outside the church where the gargoyles attack

MISSION 3

✷ *COLOUR BODY*
Use your Shotgun on the door in the secret passage

✷ *BIG MELEE*
Check out the coffin close to the Crossbow in the secret passage

✷ *PLAIN WORLD*
Reach the pillar at the top of the waterfall then grapple over to acquire the cheat

✷ *TRANSLUCENT FIEND*
Shoot the statue in the graveyard at the end of the street using the Crossbow

MISSION 5

✷ *INFINITE SPEED*
Play the game a second time and you'll find a door in the castle courtyard that can only be opened using the Rifle

✷ *ARMOURY ANYTIME*
Also on your second play, shoot the door in the room with the large gears using the Rifle

✷ *ARCHAIC CLOTHES*
Check out the vat of slime during the confrontation with Dracula

MISSION 6

✷ *SICK PLAYER*
Use the Shotgun on the door at the bottom of the Crossbow upgrade chamber

MISSION 7

✷ *METAL FIEND*
Jump down onto the ledge from the highest chamber behind the waterfall

✷ *SMALL FIEND*
Investigate the lion statue spouting water from its mouth

MISSION 9

✷ *SHADOW FIEND*
Check the back of the carriage after being knocked off once you reach the horses

MISSION 10

✷ *METAL BODY*
Use the Alt Crossbow attack on the door obscured by the disintegrated statue

MISSION 11

✷ *SHADOW BODY*
Use the Shotgun on the door close to the double doors

NETHERWORLD 1

✷ *DWERGER SKIN*
Beat the Netherworld 1 challenge

NETHERWORLD 2

✷ *ARCHANGEL SKIN*
Beat the Netherworld 2 challenge

NETHERWORLD 3

✷ *WRAITH SKIN*
Beat the Netherworld 3 challenge

NETHERWORLD 4

✷ *GARGOYLE SKIN*
Beat the Netherworld 4 challenge

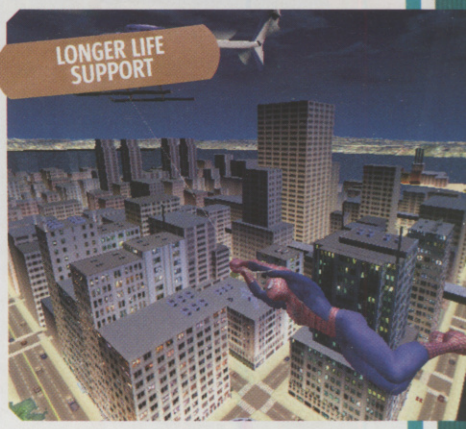
NETHERWORLD 5

✷ *FELL SKIN*
Beat the Netherworld 5 challenge

THIS MONTH'S KISS OF LIFE

SPIDER-MAN 2

PS2, XBOX, GC



I've been hunched over in my room for ages now and I've squirted enough sticky white gunk out using my wrists to glue a baby elephant to the ceiling. Trouble is, no matter how frantically I go at it, I just can't seem to get all the Hero Awards in Spider-Man 2. Got any tips for me, before I dry up completely?

Nick, East London

CVG *Nick, normally I'd prescribe some bed rest to get those gaming juices flowing again, but somehow I don't think I'm going to get you to stop fiddling with your joypad until all those accolades are yours. So, because I'm nice, here's a complete rundown of the titles up for grabs and how to get your hands on them.*

✷ *Big Game Hunter*
Beat Rhino in Story Mode

✷ *Alien Buster*
Beat Mysterio in Story Mode

✷ *Shock Absorber*
Beat Shocker in Story Mode

✷ *Tentacle Wrangler*
Beat Doc Ock in Story Mode

✷ *Hero in Training*
Collect 15,000 hero points

✷ *Hero*
Collect 45,000 hero points

✷ *Superhero*
Collect 100,000 hero points

✷ *Mega Hero*
Collect 200,000 hero points

✷ *Drenched Explorer*
Collect all 130 Buoy Tokens

✷ *Master Explorer*
Collect all Exploration Tokens

✷ *Towering Explorer*
Collect all Skyscraper Tokens

✷ *Watch Dog*
Collect all Hideout Tokens

✷ *Watchful Explorer*
Find all Secret Tokens

✷ *Employee of the Month*
Complete all 20 Pizza Missions

✷ *Lover not a Fighter*
Finish all Mary Jane missions

✷ *Shutterbug*
Complete all six Daily Bugle missions

✷ *Silver Medallist*
Complete all challenges

✷ *Anger Manager*
Stop 25 road rages

✷ *Automobile Avenger*
Stop 25 car jackings

✷ *Balloon Popper*
Pop 25 balloons

✷ *Bane of Petty Thieves*
Stop 25 purse-snatchers

✷ *Champ*
Beat 200 enemies

✷ *Crime Stopper*
Stop 250 petty crimes

✷ *Friend to Children*
Return 25 balloons to children

✷ *Game Master*
Complete 100 per cent of game

✷ *Gold Medallist*
Beat all challenge Mega times

✷ *Good Samaritan*
Help 250 citizens in distress

✷ *Hardcore Gamer*
Beat all arcade games

✷ *Honorary Deputy*
Assist 25 officers

✷ *Human Ambulance*
Prevent 25 medical emergencies

✷ *Knowledge Seeker*
Collect all 213 Hint Markers

✷ *Life Preserver*
Prevent 25 sinking boat disasters

✷ *Lifter of Spirits*
Rescue 25 hanging citizens

✷ *Mega Champ*
Beat 500 enemies

✷ *Party Crasher*
Stop 25 battle royals

✷ *Speed Freak*
Get maximum Swing Speed

✷ *Stick Up Artist*
Foil 25 robberies

✷ *Sucker*
Foil 25 ambushes

✷ *Vigilant Explorer*
Stop 25 battle royals

SURGERY IS ALWAYS OPEN!

You don't want Nurse CVG's stash to get empty! Flex those fingers and give her column a good filling by texting your cheats, tips and questions to the number below. If it's a long or hard one, slip an email into her inbox!

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(SAME FOR T-MOBILE USERS)

How to enter: first type 'CVG TIPS' and then enter your hint, tip or strategy. Make sure you tell us the name of the game and what format the tip is for!

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CVGTIPS@DENNIS.CO.UK

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4

- PUBLISHER KONAMI
- DEVELOPER KONAMI
- OUT: OCTOBER

ONLINE GAMING | x8

IN A NUTSHELL

The most crucial update in PES history is ablaze with burning issues. Online play – if so, how? Will it feature real team names, player names, and associated authentic kits? Plus can the best gameplay get better?

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

ALSO ON

XBOX, PC

WWW.PESLEAGUE.CO.UK

Fernando Torres scores a Larsson-like header. Pity some people weren't back from the loo

We've played the very latest version of PES4, and it's already better than Winning Eleven 8

There are all-new goal celebrations – some of them are unlockable from the PES Shop

Welcome to our long-awaited first look at the fourth Pro Evolution Soccer. Time for the truth after months of lunchtime speculations and gossip on forums.

Although PES4's counterpart Winning Eleven 8 is out to buy in Japan, CVG already has official PES4 code from Konami. Since PES4 is already improved over WE8, we won't be giving you an import review. Instead, let's talk you through possible further improvements to come in this feature – including what may be happening with Xbox.

ANOTHER YEAR OF SPECULATION

Speculation about the next PES begins around February on CVG, the time Konami TYO puts out a modified version of the current edition in Japan. These updates are a peak at what we might expect in the next fully-fledged PES. WE7 International was our first look at the new graphics engine to be employed in PES4, and was sweet but nothing shocking.

It also showed us how Konami TYO has been developing the role of the referee, most notably playing the advantage but also a rather annoying Hand Ball decision which almost always occurred in the Penalty area, but was hardly ever given against the defending team.

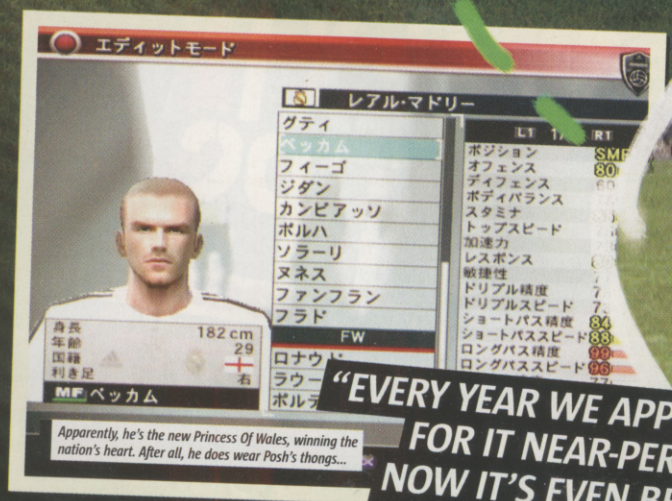
These psuedo-sequels prove how Konami TYO is constantly developing and testing ideas in PES, but while the modifications in these Japan-only versions offer tasters, they are never a patch on the main event.

Free kicks can be taken in one of three ways now, so you've more to practise in Training

FOCUS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

Once again Konami TYO has focused most determinedly on control in PES4. Year on year we applaud PES for its near-perfect control feel and moan that the only thing that needs sorting out is official kits. Year on year Konami TYO proves us wrong by expanding the possibilities for the player on the ball, and tactically within teams. We're shown the bigger picture that we couldn't possibly have imagined no matter how many months we spend trying to second-guess what should be next.

In PES4, Konami TYO wants us to appreciate how much AI affects the realistic flow of the game. It also



Apparently, he's the new Princess Of Wales, winning the nation's heart. After all, he does wear Posh's thongs...

Ronaldinho terrorising the defence with his fleet of foot and strength of body. A joy to play

"EVERY YEAR WE APPLAUD PES FOR IT NEAR-PERFECT CONTROL. NOW IT'S EVEN BETTER"

ONLY A MOTHER COULD LOVE

We've seen the next FIFA, and we've seen the next Club Football. We can tell you with conviction that PES4 has the best player likenesses of all three.

Best of all, if you examine the replays, you can see their facial expressions change with each situation. They're less robotic than PES3, although some of the more bizarre goal celebrations make us laugh.

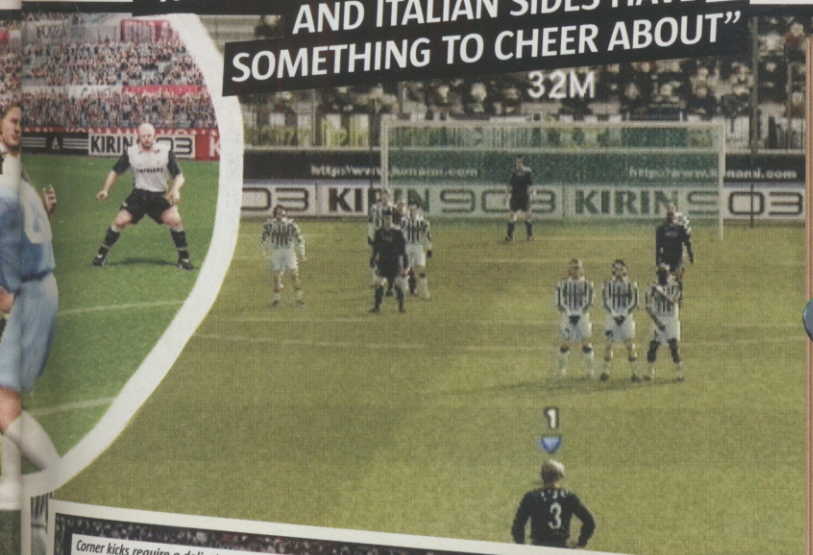
Totti celebrates for AS Roma, but who on earth are Delzicks?! (Actually they're Celtic)

Makes such a positive difference seeing the official kits for Europe's biggest teams, eh?

Both home and away kits are authentic and completely up-to-date. Ajax v PSV here – do you recognise anyone?

Check out Ashley Cole. We reckon PES4 has the best player likenesses we seen so far, and the kits are spot-on too

"FANS OF THE BIG SPANISH, DUTCH AND ITALIAN SIDES HAVE SOMETHING TO CHEER ABOUT"
32M



OLÉ!

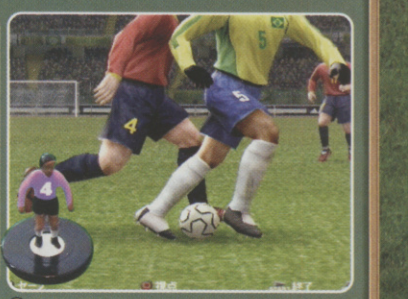
By now we're sure all PES3 players have mastered Zizi's Marseille Turn and you're eager to move on to the next level.

Although we haven't been able to do them just yet, we know Ronaldinho's trick from the Nike ad is in here, plus C Ronaldo's back-heel cross that he performed during the FA Cup final. They really raise the roof... if you can make them work.

Stretch to sidefoot past the defender and charge ahead to get a chance on goal

Owen wrong foots Paul Jones, much quicker than he could in PES3. Looks wicked

When receiving the ball, players often shield the ball to stop a cheeky tackle from behind



Scissor-like steps keep the ball away from the stampeding feet of the Spanish defence

wants us to enjoy the difference between the strengths of defenders, midfielders and strikers. Of course, amidst all of this there's also been refinements to how the ball responds to all kinds of touch.

NEW FIFA, NEW THREAT

Before talking about the arrival of some official club teams in PES, we should pause for a reality check. Until last year, that PES was the best and FIFA just sucked was a widely held view among serious players. Then came FIFA 04, marking EA's intention to take 'soccer' seriously.

Crucially, the gameplay in FIFA stepped up to shake off PES, constantly gnawing away at EA's heels. While not perfect, FIFA's Off-the-Ball feature gave us smart and very realistic new options. Also, you can play FIFA 04 online against your mates – something PES fans expected for PES3 but didn't get. As for those official teams, in FIFA 04 it's more a case of who isn't in there than who is. FIFA 04 asked a lot of PES, but Konami TYO has been coming up with the answers.

GOING OUT DRESSED LIKE THAT

No official Premiership or Scottish Premier League kits confirmed as yet for PES4, but fans of the big Spanish, Dutch and Italian sides have something to cheer about. Real Madrid, Ajax, and AC Milan are among the top European club teams to be wearing their full official kits in PES4 and look so much better for it.

Unsurprisingly, Real Madrid proved to be one of the toughest licences to get, but the fact that Los Galacticos is in full effect for PES4 is a good sign for things to come. Negotiations with the top Scot and English sides are underway, so fingers crossed we may yet see them in PES4. It's a start at least – although nowhere near FIFA standards, we must admit.

DANK U ZEER! GRACIAS MUCHOS!

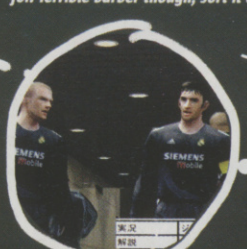
There are a 56 licensed club teams in PES4, with the slim chance of more to be confirmed soon.

They comprise of top-flight Dutch, Spanish and Italian sides, among them Ajax and PSV Eindhoven, Valencia, Real Madrid, Juve plus both Roman teams, as well as Inter and AC Milan. Konami won't officially divulge the hold-ups regarding Premiership and SPL teams. Let's hope they make it so!

Nedved side-foots a pass, wearing his official Juve regalia and sporting trademark mop

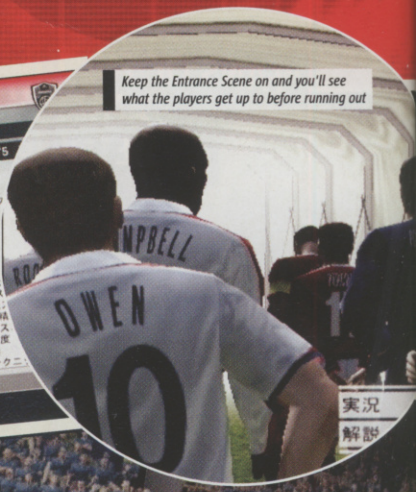
Thierry Henry with his socks hiked up to his armpits, showing Gallas who's Le Boss

Figo dummies Ronaldinho while escaping a rough house tackle from Davids just behind



No idea who these guys are, or who they play for. Terrible barber though, sort it out

Ronaldo is old news. Kaka is the Brazilian player the world is talking about now



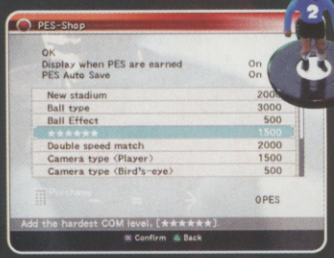
Keep the Entrance Scene on and you'll see what the players get up to before running out

THIS SEASON'S CATALOGUE

Glad to see that the PES Shop idea has been carried over to PES4.

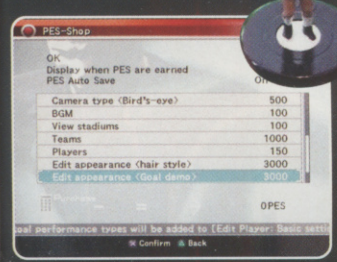
Points gained from training or at the completion of a match pay for extra gameplay modes, option settings, and fun stuff like player hairstyles and so on. There's a new Sky-Cam, six-star difficulty setting and First-Person View to Add To Basket.

Classic Brazil – pretty much everyone's favourite choice from the teams available in the PES Shop



It's hard to score on three stars. On six, you may as well just board up your goal and hope for the best

We tried playing a match like this. Didn't last long! Reminded us of Sensible Soccer!



You'll need to play an awful lot of games to afford this little lot, but we reckon it's worth it though

Look at the state of the Welsh national kit, it's a flippin' disgrace – nothing like it should be!

If a player think's he's been fouled, he'll appeal to the ref for a decision. Get on with it!

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE FACILITIES

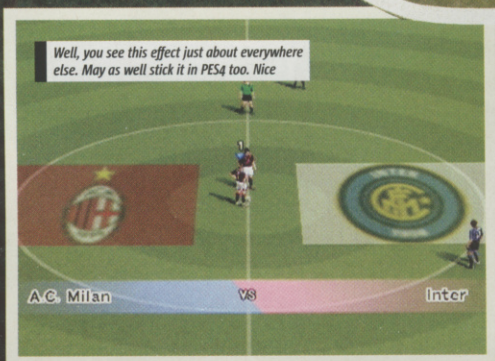
Of course PES isn't completely lacking in additional features, and its Master League is still a real asset. Master League in PES4 takes the realism even further for all budding player managers, with players showing the strains of injury over long periods of time.

Your key men could miss an entire season if you're not careful, and this could be the result of playing them when they are not fully fit and more likely to feel the effects of a tough challenge. We're only just getting started with our PES4 Master League squads on CVG, but we hope to give you more details on how our seasons pan out in our PES4 review.

Okay, we've teased you long enough. Now we can talk gameplay! As always, it isn't until you've played the new PES that you taste the badness in the old one. Let's start with the set pieces. Corners must now be driven in with accuracy to score those powering headers, or deftly floated into the area for strikers to get a boot on. Free kicks can be taken in one of three ways: directly and with lay-offs from the left or right.

Hartson is stretchered off for Celtic. Yeh, but you should see the other guy, etc...

Choose who you want to ref the match – this guy is fairly soft and lets you foul all day long



Well, you see this effect just about everywhere else. May as well stick it in PES4 too. Nice

SOMETHING SPECIAL

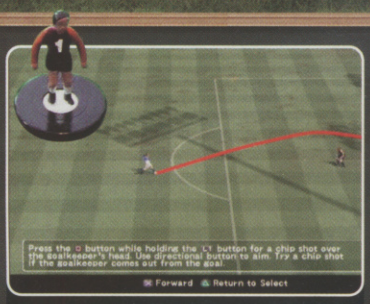
Throw ins: you're now throwing into space toward a team-mate, and can throw the ball so that they'll run onto it. All that stuff is small fry compared to the new depths in on-the-ball control, and the contrasts between roles within the team. The feel of a player isn't just down to clever feet; it's now to do with body strength. Thierry Henry is dazzling and swift, but a burly defender can disarm him with a strong tackle if they're well placed. Players like Ronaldinho and Obafemi Martins are nigh impossible to wrestle away from the ball, spinning defenders like Bey Blades.

You'll notice how AI makes a difference too, as you watch a competent midfield perfect its third-man-running tactics all the

UNTIL THE SUN GOES DOWN

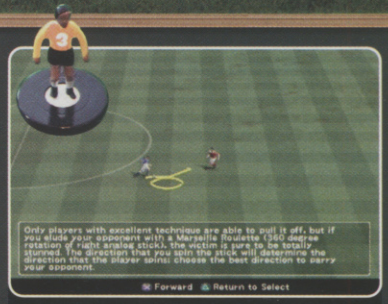
Just so all the great On-the-Ball and tactical stuff doesn't stay buried in the game, PES4's training mode is more extensive than usual.

A Beginner Mode has been added, so you can appreciate new basics such as weighted passes. Situation Training, also new, tells you more about how to make good use of dribbling tricks, and defensive plays. While all this stuff won't be of much use to a PES pro, it gives a terrific grounding in the game and makes it clear why PES plays so much better than any other footy game on the market.



Don't be accused of hit and hope: training mode tells you how to shoot from distance

Using R1 to let the ball run through, allow your team mate to take the shot. Easy



It's Zizi's Marseille Roulette move, and the best time to use it when not just showing off

way down to the edge of the area, whereupon your strikers make inventive runs into the box to smack their half-volleys and whip in headers. It's heart-in-mouth stuff all the way because you feel more like the players, and more in tune with their team's performance overall.

LITTLE THINGS THAT MATTER

As the drama unfolds on the pitch, Konami has added a few extra touches to bolster the impression of realism. The most obvious addition is the presence of a referee trotting about the park. Although visibly he can be confusing during fast passing play, we haven't noticed the ball clipping off his heels or smacking into him in any way. Also we haven't been able to foul him yet... but we'll keep trying.

Officials are like the true-to-life comedy teams we know and love with some off-side decisions too – we've had a few goal celebrations interrupted by the sight of a linesman holding up his flag for a late off-side decision. In keeping with the injury theme of Master League, players must now be stretchered off the field when injured – an icon flashes in the top of the screen to let you know when they're to come back on, or if you need to make a sub.

Icons are also used to indicate when the referee says play on, to show whether free kicks are direct or indirect, and so on, just to make situations that much clearer. Last, but not least, look closely at our screenshots to notice how kits get muddy during the course of a game.

Individual physical traits and improved tactical AI make computer teams tougher to beat

Highbury on a sunny day, temperature 52%, and a cross wind... in case you want to know

Stadiums are visually improved. In fact the overall look is more realistic, less garish by far

Ronaldinho, alongside Inter's Martins – both are hard to stop

THERE'S ONLY ONE CVG

Get your crayons and blunt-ended scissors out again to make those Premiership and National kits resemble their real-life counterparts precisely.

Make Edgar Davids' hair black, (not blonde!) and keep on top of Beckham's ever-changing barnet. Yup, Pro Evo's Edit mode has more options than ever before, including high socks for guys like Thierry Henry and United's Ronaldo. Looks wicked out on the pitch.

You can hand-draw parts of the club crest now, to be absolutely anything you want... hmm

Keep on top of Beckham's changing hairstyles, that's if we care about that any more

Ridiculous shirt that you won't want to be seen dead wearing, available as a stock selection

Alphie Speedboots from AC Pork Chops in the making, famous for his mad staring eyes...

NOT IF BUT WHEN

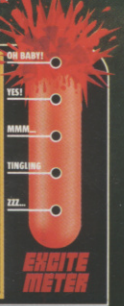
For most of you, the new and improved PES will be everything and more than you could have hoped for. That it is also coming to Xbox, in addition to PC, means that even more players can appreciate what PES has to offer as an alternative to FIFA.

The last burning question has yet to be answered by Konami: is PES4 playable online? Sadly, we can tell you for sure that the PS2 and PC versions will not allow online gameplay. Xbox is another matter, however, and Konami has hinted very strongly at versus gameplay via Xbox Live. While Konami hasn't confirmed this at the time of going to press, our money is on playing XBL PES4 this October, otherwise Konami would have given the big No alongside the other versions. Only one problem with PES on Xbox – those god-awful controllers! But we guess we can learn to live with that.

CVG OPINION Although convinced PES4 has the best gameplay of the series, we're anxious to learn if UK teams will be official and whether or not we can play online. **Paul**

WE LOVE
- More clearly defined player abilities
- Official and great-looking club kits
- Improved, more realistic ball control

WE HATE
- No sign of official UK club kits
- Dead ball situations need attention
- Some instances of slowdown



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How to enter: first type 'CVG RIDDICK' and then the letter matching your answer. Eg: 'CVG RIDDICK B'*

*TEXTS COST 50P PLUS STANDARD OPERATING CHARGE

IT'S RIDDICKULOUS!

Bust out of the shadows with tons of Butcher Bay prizes!

Until recently we didn't fancy prison much. The thought of being locked up with hundreds of shaven-headed mentalists who kept winking at us didn't really appeal.

Then we played Chronicles Of Riddick: Escape From Butcher Bay. Turns out prison is actually okay, so long as you're built like a brick sh*thouse, are handy with a shooter, and can creep around in the shadows like a cat wearing IR goggles. Vin Diesel, basically.

In fact, we loved Riddick's brutal breakout batterage so much we took it to the shower block, dropped the soap, and stuffed it full with a fat 83% CVG score.

That's why we've had a word with our mates at Vivendi Universal Games to hook you up with the ultimate Riddick prize package. We're talking a massive 28" TV and DVD with a superb surround sound system, an Xbox, a copy of the game for the winner and 5 copies for runners-up!

So don't just rot away behind bars – stage a breakout and scoop some brilliant Butcher Bay prizes!

VIN DIESEL POWERED!

FIRST PRIZE

28" FLATSCREEN SANYO TV

- Sanyo DVD player
- Sanyo 5.1 Dolby Digital Surround Sound System
- Xbox Console
- Copy of Chronicles Of Riddick: Escape From Butcher Bay!

FIVE RUNNERS-UP PRIZES

EACH RECEIVE A COPY OF CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK: ESCAPE FROM BUTCHER BAY!

Note: Prizes may vary from those shown

TO WIN: PROTECT YA NECK!

Stabbing inmates with shanks and popping screws with shotguns is cool, but our favourite Butcher Bay brutality is snapping necks. Just tell us which screenshot shows a guard about to get a neck massage, Riddick style.

A

These nice fellas are steeping up for a bit of fisting. Happens a lot in prison, we hear

B

Riddick hints and tips #1: You can't snap massive robot's necks. Shoot them. Quick!

C

This dude's got a nasty crick in his neck, and Riddick's about to pop it right out for him

YOU'VE GOT TO BE IN IT TO WIN IT!

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INSANE IN THE BRAIN!

TOTALLY MENTAL PSI-OPS COMPETITION!

Crazy prizes ESPecially for you!

We can read your mind. We're doing it right now. The answer is nope, she won't take off her Nurse's outfit for a special Surgery Uncut edition.

We also know you're desperate to play Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy, Midway's mind-scrambling third-person shooter. It's a fully loaded chunk of smart shooting action with a hefty side order of ESP object manipulation that's so well implemented it gave us a migraine trying to get our heads around it.

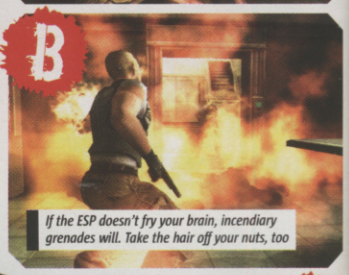
And we ALSO know that you'd love to scoop a truly mental stack of Psi-Ops prizes so your brain could experience the lobe-bursting bliss of levitating enemies, shooting them, then throwing their spurting bodies across the room. We sent a telepathic message to our mates at Midway and they've hooked us up with a massive TV, a PS2, six copies of the game, six awesome Psi-Ops T-shirts, and six exclusive and properly mad Psi-Ops Sticky Brain toys!

Come on then – we're getting a headache and we'd prefer you sent or texted us your answer!

TO WIN: USE YOUR MIND POWER TO SPOT THE LEVITATION!

There are few sweeter feelings in games than using your psychic powers to levitate a flailing enemy with the flick of your wrist, then shooting your load into him. Tell us which screenshot shows this moment of man-on-man madness and you could win the lot!

That's gross. We've heard of losing your head, but you can go too far. Disgusting



If the ESP doesn't fry your brain, incendiary grenades will. Take the hair off your nuts, too

This guard's going up in the world – we've just given him a raise!

FIRST PRIZE

28" FLATSCREEN HITACHI TV

- Hitachi DVD player
- Hitachi 5.1 Dolby Digital Surround Sound System
- Hitachi VCR
- PS2 Console
- Copy of Psi-Ops
- Psi-Ops T-shirt and a Psi-Ops Sticky Brain!

FIVE RUNNERS-UP PRIZES

EACH RECEIVE A COPY OF PSI-OPS, A PSI-OPS T-SHIRT, AND A PSI-OPS STICKY BRAIN!

Note: Prizes may vary from those shown

YOU'VE GOT TO BE IN IT TO WIN IT!

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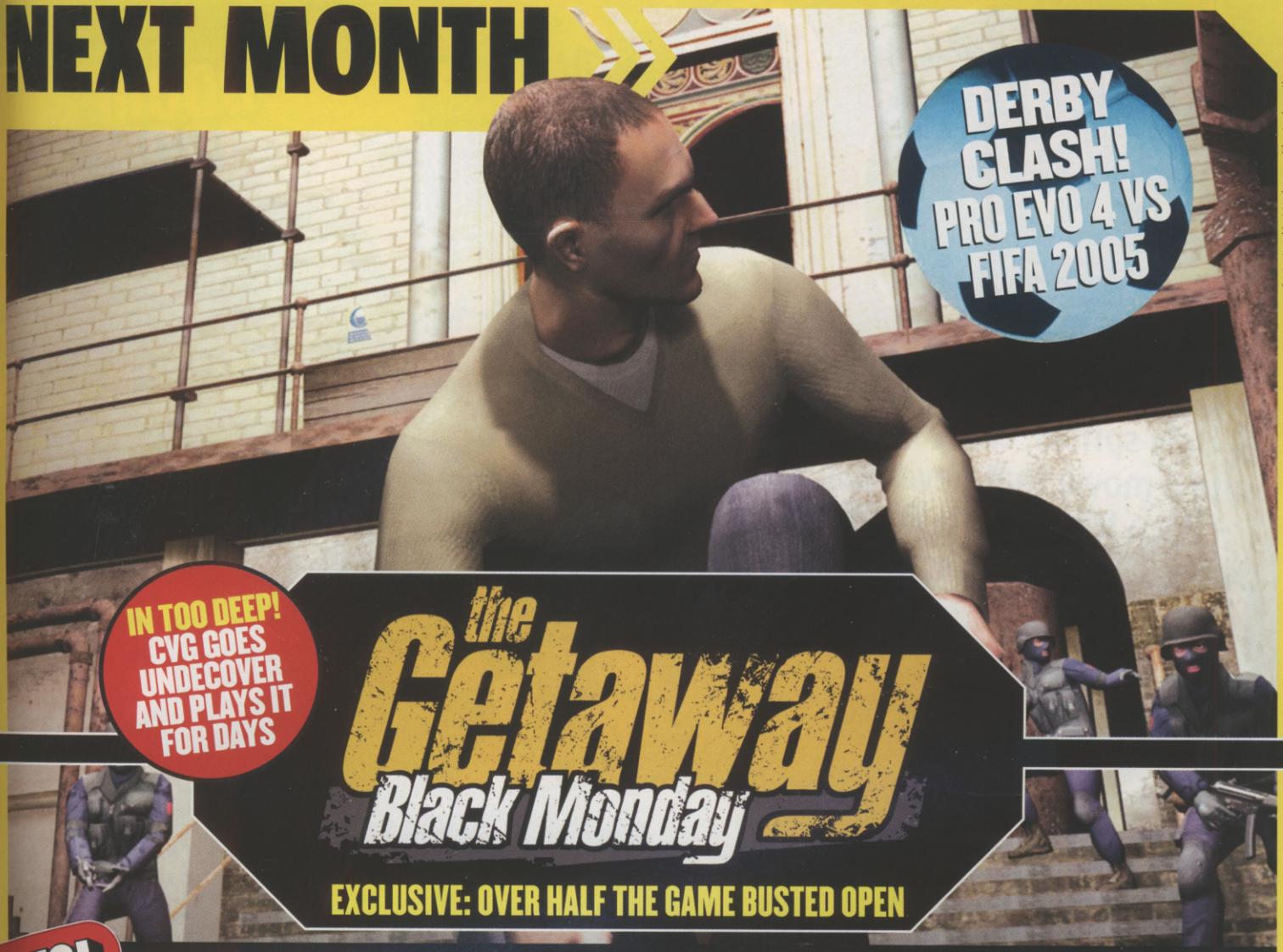


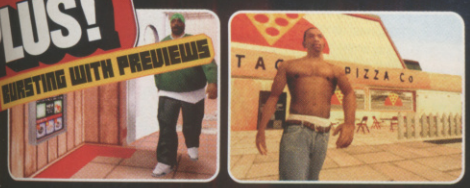
DERBY CLASH! PRO EVO 4 VS FIFA 2005

IN TOO DEEP! CVG GOES UNDECOVER AND PLAYS IT FOR DAYS

the Getaway Black Monday

EXCLUSIVE: OVER HALF THE GAME BUSTED OPEN

PLUS! BURSTING WITH PREVIEWS



GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS

Rockstar gives CVG another VIP pass behind the scenes with the biggest game on Planet PS2. More shizzlin' screens and killer info

HALO 2

We play the crap out of the multiplayer! Stacks of maps busted open. PLUS! New weapons, game modes and features revealed

FORZA MOTORSPORT

No other games mag knows their driving games like CVG. Next month we burn the hell out of Xbox's online supercar

PLUS! JAMMED WITH REVIEWS

BURNOUT 3

We don't drive with seatbelts and airbags are for pussies! CVG gets bashed and slammed to shit reviewing EA's mental speedster

KILLZONE

Don't miss CVG's power-packed hands-on preview. We take our squad of elite killers over the top and stomp Helghast heads

OUTRUN 2

Sega's blazing racer gives a new meaning to the word powerslide. You'll be skidding your boxers when you read our revved-up review

PLUS!

EVERY GAME PLAYED TO DESTRUCTION! Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition ✷ Colin McRae 2005 ✷ Blinx 2 ✷ Tiger Woods 2005 ✷ Pokémon Leaf Green & Fire Red ✷ Rome: Total War ✷ Destroy All Humans ✷ Terminator 3: Redemption ✷ Star Wars: Battlefront ✷ Madden 2005 ✷ Resident Evil: Outbreak

SIZZLING NEWS, NO-BULL REVIEWS AND GAMING GOSSIP. ON SALE 23 SEPTEMBER

COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES CVG

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10 YEARS AGO

COUNT YOURSELF LUCKY!

CVG is the world's first and best games magazine. But while the mag has forever been a class act, games haven't always been as good as they are today...

1994

ISSUE 156

Ugly sprites, cacky animation, and a movie that never happened – it's a trip back to Doom's day

With Doom 3 splattered all over this month's CVG like offal in an abattoir, it's time to look back ten years at the previews of the original Doom.

Converted for the ill-fated Atari Jaguar console, it's pretty unbelievable that such a seemingly random assemblage of Lego block-sized pixels passed as a state-of-the-art shooter.

DOOMED WITH A VIEW

Admittedly, we spend a lot of time on this page slagging off how crap old games looked, but if ever there was a clear example of why it is better to be alive now than a decade ago, it's the difference between Doom and Doom 3.

Just take a quick glance at these screens and you'll see that in the cold light of the present day, Doom was pretty ropey to look at – and the sound wasn't much better. The Imps look more like a three-year-old's finger painting of a man made of poo, the pistol sounds like someone trying to cough out of their butt and the animations are about as natural as a pig with no pecker. And as any farmer will tell you, that's just no good.

1

What's going on here? It's a graphical mess but back then... well, we were blind

2

Lots of red, the art director said. Not thinking it would look like the inside of a submarine

VIDEO NASTY

Exciting news was that a Hollywood studio was going to make Doom: The Movie. As if. The only way you might be able to approach the game's rampant, unmitigated carnage would be to get Jerry Bruckheimer to produce, and Saddam Hussein to direct. Which would be good, though every time the Butcher of Baghdad shouted "Action!" it'd just be a description of the next scene, rather than an instruction to the cameraman.

To mimic the unconvincing, lifeless movements of the game characters, Ben Affleck would star, and a heavily made-up Britney Spears would play the Spider Mastermind he falls in love with. The only way they could display affection would be for him to fire his BFG 9000 into one of her eight, beady black eyes.

Mark Hamill thought that if he hung out with the Lion King he'd land a West End show

BEST GAME #127

MICRO MACHINES 2. Score: 94

Now, this was a game! Crappy, untrendy, top-down graphics, paltry sound and simplistic gameplay. But what a laugh. As four of you raced your little toy cars round snooker tables and kitchen floors, you'd be laughing and screaming like a bunch of punch-drunk hyenas.

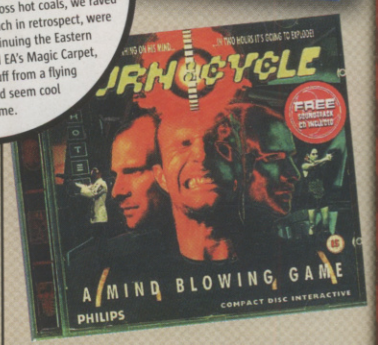
WORST GAME #209

WORLD CUP '94. Score: 42

What a great idea. Wait until five months after the tournament has finished and then rush out a footie game that looks, sounds and plays more like a drunken street brawl than a game of football. We'd rather have eaten a plate of congealed piss.

COUNT YOURSELF UNLUCKIER

'There once lived a poor tailor, who had a son called Aladdin, a careless, idle boy. This so grieved the father that he died...' You wouldn't think you could get a game out of that, but back in November 1994 Aladdin was being developed for the Amiga. Essentially a platformer where you collected apples and avoided running across hot coals, we raved about the 'great graphics' which in retrospect, were flatter than roadkill. Continuing the Eastern theme, we also previewed EA's Magic Carpet, where you shot at stuff from a flying rug. Because it did seem cool at the time.



Elsewhere in the November 1994 issue was a preview of Wing Commander 3: The Heart Of The Tiger. This turgid excuse for some extravagantly expensive FMV had the distinction of marking the low point in Mark 'I thought the Force was with me' Hamill's career. The low point being starring in the game, not being in CVG – just to be clear. ✷

EMBARRASSING AD #1

Possibly one of the worst ads ever to appear in CVG has to be this Reservoir Dogs pastiche. Everything about it is wrong, wrong, WRONG, and we will tell you why.

Firstly: joysticks. You are just not interested in the guys behind the moulded plastic casings. Because you just know they are going to be thin-legged baldies, like that dude in the middle. And, like dull. You can just imagine the scene: "Why do I have to be Mr Fighter Stick? It's easy for you, Mr Asciipad MD-6 – you've got a cool-sounding name!" And then you see Mr Asciipad SN there on the end. Oooooh, you bad! Want to hold that pad any more like a handbag? Want to stand any more like a girl? This isn't an advert – it's a tragedy trying to sell something, and probably failing at that.

funk up your fone

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Natasha Bedingfield - Single	151003	149891
Keane - Everybody's Changing	151004	149329
Ronan/ Leann - Last Thing On My..	151005	150811
D12 - My Band	149725	149355
Anastacia - Left Outside Alone	149210	149132
The Rasmus - In the Shadows	149400	146287
Maroon 5 - This Love	149900	149086
Streets - Fit But You Know It	150262	149334
Usher - Yeah	148960	146155
Busted - Air Hostess	150261	149304
Ash - Orpheus	151006	149893
Gunther /S'shine Girls-Ding Dong	151007	150092
Special D - Come With Me	149401	146306
McFly - 5 Colours In Her Hair	149257	149265
DJ Casper - Cha Cha Slide	148623	148627
Lostprophets - Wake Up Make a..	151008	151010
Boogie Pimps - Sunny	150264	149375
Gabrielle - Stay the Same	151009	151011

DANCE	MONO	POLY
Gia - Despina Vandi	140279	138348
Good Luck - Basement Jaxx	146054	143730
So Confused - 2play Ft Raghav	146159	146160
Somebody To Love-Boogie Pimps	144376	117101
Born Slippy Nuxx - Underworld	126478	116975
Fly On The Wings Of - Xtm & Dj	116215	118500
Make Luv - Room 5	111639	111643
Boys Of Summer - Dj Sammy	110321	110627
Logical Song - Scooter	102313	107043
Weekend - Scooter	112641	112592
Ur A Superstar - Love Inc	109977	107822
Rubberneckin - Elvis Presley	124657	124635
Who Said - Planet Funk	122492	121696
All In My Head - Kosheen	121730	121533
Golden Path -Chemical Brothers	124545	124338
Husan -Bhangra Knights	116956	116678

FOOTBALL	MONO	POLY
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Arsenal - Amazing Reds	122962	122963
Aston Villa -Holteenders In The Sky	122964	122965
Aston Villa - Roll Along	122966	122967
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Chelsea - Super Franky Lampard	122986	122987
Chelsea - We are the famous CFC	122988	122989
Everton - He was Just 17	122990	122991
Everton - You Are My Everton	122992	122993
Leeds - We Had Joy	122998	122999
Liverpool - You'll Never Walk Alone	123006	123007
Liverpool - We All Live In A Red..	123008	123009
Man City - Blue Moon	123012	123013
Man United - Our Trophy Back	123016	123017
Man United - The Great Escape	123018	123019
Middlesborough - Boro Till I Die	123024	123025
Newcastle Utd - Blaydon Races	123026	123027
Newcastle Utd - 1 Alan Shearer	123028	123029
Southampton - Mr Eriksson	123034	123035
Southampton - When The Saints	123036	123037
Glory Glory	123038	123039
Spurs - We Are Tottenham	123040	123041
Wolves - King Kenny Miller	123042	123043
Wolves -Hey Jones 'E'	123044	123045
There's Only One....	123048	123049
We've Got That Double Feeling	123052	123053
Here We Go	123056	123057
Match Of The Day	123058	123059

OLD SKOOL	MONO	POLY
Let Me Be Your Fantasy - Baby D	-	116148
Rappers Delight - Sugarhill Gang	111774	111849
Hanging On A String - Loose Ends	111755	111830
Gotta Have Your Love - Mantronix	111764	111839
Cant Hide Your Love - David Joseph	111734	111809
All Night Long - Mary Jane Girls	111779	111854
Kiss From A Rose - Seal	100078	108564
Gonna Go My Way - Lenny Kravitz	-	109352

TOP SELLERS	MONO	POLY
Where Is The Luv - Black Eyed Ps	120393	121454
Fields Of Athenray	100381	108273
2 + 2 = Radiohead	143300	126719
Halloween theme	100048	109159
Superstar- Jamelia	124982	125020
Lose Yourself - Eminem	138518	107810
X Gon Give It Ya - Dmx	101360	116167
Skater Boi - Avril Lavigne	108011	110068
You're A Superstar - Love Inc	109977	107822
Pass That Dutch - Missy Elliott	143849	126080
Pink Panther theme	100632	107771
Bat Out Of Hell - Meatloaf	100343	119445
Come Undone - Robbie	112605	115736
Breathe - Blu Cantrell	120539	120508
Xtm & Dj Chucky -On The Wings	116215	118500
Lose Yourself - Eminem	108002	107810
Bring Me To Life Evanescence	110559	111603
Clocks - Coldplay	108122	111125
Simply The Best - Tina Turner	100802	120612
Great Escape	100382	123019

ROCK MUSIC	MONO	POLY
Going Under- Evanescence	122505	123070
The Boys Of Summer - The Ataris	122485	124623
Bring Me To Life Evanescence	110559	111603
Did My Time - Korn	123328	121873
St Anger - Metallica	120383	120615
Faint - Linkin Park	112692	120216
The Anthem -Good Charlotte	110370	123074
Headstrong -Trapt	111160	N/A
She Hates Me -Puddle Of Mudd	102548	N/A
Sleeping Awake -P.O.D.	116230	N/A
Somewhere I Belong -Linkin Park	111021	111688
Times Like These - Foo Fighters	110059	107856
Minerva - Deftones	117180	117186
Mobscene - Marilyn Manson	116924	117261
Young & Hopeless -Good Charlotte	120300	N/A
Addicted To Love - R Palmer	111616	111514

TV & FILM	MONO	POLY
Airwolf	100621	108213
A Team	100682	107898
Axel F	100010	108195
Eye Of The Tiger	100687	108299
Friends	110615	108276
Good, Bad, Ugly	100689	108621
Friends	110615	108276
Halloween	100048	109159
The Hulk	101155	109167
Italian Job	100691	107026
Jackass	102708	117260
James Bond	100016	107023
Jaws	100764	109171
Lord Of The Rings	101158	108715
Mission Impossible	100142	107896
Miami Vice	101308	109117
Only Fools & Horses	101226	109069
Pulp Fiction	100695	108476
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Terminator	101086	109255

RNB CHART	MONO	POLY
Hey Mama - Black Eyed Peas	149069	149074
If I Can't - 50 Cent	112700	126530
Baby I Love You- Jo Lopez	148923	144515
Yeah - Usher	148960	146155
The Way You Move - Outkast	125613	126028
Must Be Love-Fya	148626	148019
Dude - Beenie Man	148967	148628
Can't Get Enough - Raghav	149041	148014
She Wants To Move Nerd	N/A	148029
Fell In Love With A Boy - J Stone	148947	146259
Clubbin Marques Houston	149072	149077
Through The Wire - Kanye West	148988	146290
Another Day - Lemar	148360	146297
Badaboom - B2K Feat Fabolous	144374	N/A

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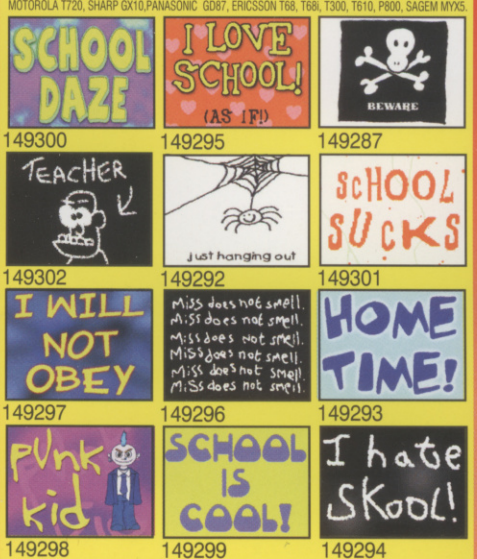

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